

APRIL, 1906

10 CENTS

The Popular Magazine



APRIL, 1906

**"ROWDY OF THE 'CROSS L,'" a Complete Novel by B. M. BOWER,
will appear in the May number**

VOL. V.

NO. 6

The Popular Magazine

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WARNING—Do not subscribe through agents unknown to you. Complaints are daily made by persons who have been thus victimized.

Money-Making Opportunities in Advertising

Greater Income Facts About Correspondence Instruction That the Publishers of The Popular Magazine Believe Will Interest Its Readers



By **GEORGE H. POWELL**

FOR some time the publishers of THE POPULAR MAGAZINE have been urging me to lay before its readers more complete facts regarding the Powell System of Advertising Instruction by correspondence.

Knowing as they do my reputation as the leading expert of America, and believing that there is much to be said of inestimable value to ambitious young men and women, not possible in an ordinary page advertisement, they feel sure I can throw much light on the great possibilities of the advertising business as a most profitable vocation for both sexes.

Advertising is expanding at such a wonderful rate that it is to-day a very serious problem as to how enough really competent ad writers and managers can be qualified to fill the constantly growing demand.

I hope I may at least throw additional light on the subject, because my entire energies are concentrated on this great vocation, and I am anxious to interest those who have so much to gain through proper training.

That the Powell System of Correspondence Instruction is to-day everywhere recognized as the leading one goes without saying, and when I see the great good it has accomplished my chief regret is that many who are struggling in uncongenial and underpaid clerical positions cannot realize the importance of qualifying for a business that quickly pays from \$1,200.00 to \$6,000.00 a year, and offers even much greater financial gain.

Advertising Instruction a Boon to Young Men and Women and to Business Men.

A mere glance at the magazines and newspapers of to-day in comparison with those of a few short years ago tells the story.

The increase in space is astonishing to a degree, and not only has the volume doubled again and again, but national publications are multiplying each year.

Five years ago the publisher with one good magazine and plenty of advertising patronage was amply satisfied. To-day the leaders are hardly satisfied with three magazines, and Mr. Munsey, that wonderfully able pioneer publisher of popular priced magazines, has just established a fourth venture.

The publishers of THE POPULAR now have three, and so it goes.

All this piling up of more and more national publications means that this great country of ours is developing at a prodigious rate, and that advertisers are multiplying by the hundreds.

Add all this to the fact that old-fogy business men by the score are rapidly coming to a realization that modern advertising is an absolute necessity, and it is doubly plain as to why the skilled ad writer is so eagerly wanted from Maine to California.

Why the Powell System is the Only One Endorsed by the Great Advertising Authorities and Publishers.

The Powell System of teaching advertising by mail is wholly different from any other, for three important reasons.

FIRST, it gives that actual, practical instruction and real practice, instead of mere theory and the usual lecture paper.

SECOND, it is the product of my own brain and long experience, and is arranged so the student's time is not wasted through a hopeless comin-

HOW·WOULD·YOU·LIKE· TO·BE·IN·HIS·PLACE?



Mr. and Mrs. A. EUGENE SMITH

Mr. and Mrs. Smith both enrolled as Powell students early in September, 1905, from Wilmington, N. C., where they then resided. About the first of the New Year Mr. Smith intimated that he would like to give up traveling on the road, and his preference being a western city I secured him a position as advertising manager of Swaine's Sanitarium, Cleveland, O., and his last letter shows how thoroughly the Powell System and a good man are appreciated. Mr. Smith's success, coupled with Mrs. Smith's ability to earn a good income on her own account, will result in a pretty large partnership income.

No less than four others, friends of Mr. and Mrs. Smith, have taken the Powell System, and enthusiastically endorse it.

Cleveland, O., Jan. 9th, 1906.

My dear Mr. Powell:

Your letter to this company and myself is before me, and I thank you very much for your kind wishes. I anticipate no trouble in making good.

I was informed night before last that in connection with my other work, I should become general manager and have full charge of the office and financial end of this institution. This is rather a larger bite than I expected; however, you know me, and I will endeavor to deliver the goods untarnished.

Under separate cover I mail you our photograph. Believe me as ever
Your friend,
A. EUGENE SMITH.

ing from the *New York American-Journal* of Feb. 11, 1906:

It even became possible for many to become expert in various useful arts at their own homes without encroaching upon their hours of labor. "Correspondence schools"—at first a favorite joke with comic paragraphers in the newspapers—proved their utility by a system of training transmitted through the mails that was even more thorough than the oral training in many of the schools where regular attendance was required.

To-day these correspondence schools, teaching nearly every imaginable means of earning a living by skilled labor and the professions, are also employment agencies; they not only turn out competent graduates, but find situations for them, employers having discovered that young men and women with sufficient intelligence and energy to learn their trades under such conditions are well worth encouraging.

This quotation shows how important it is that systems of home instruction be provided for those who cannot afford to give up their positions, but must rely on an hour or so of evening study to qualify for something better.

Observe, too, the remarks about "correspondence schools, at first a favorite joke with comic paragraphers," but now a proven factor in the rapid advancement of brainy young men and women who want to double and quadruple their incomes and future prospects.

But at the start, correspondence instruction in advertising was not what it is to-day, and not until the

Powell System was established and proven did the publishers of advertising journals cease ridiculing the idea of mail instruction.

Printers' Ink, considered the great authority, after exposing and showing up numerous instructors, investigated the Powell System and endorsed it, it being the only endorsement ever given any correspondence school of advertising.

Ad Sense, Chicago, *The Advertising World*, Columbus, O., and other leaders have on numerous occasions referred to me subscribers making inquiry as to the best instruction.



Mr. G. P. Elliott, Adv. Mgr. of the Enterprise, Beaumont, Tex., in a letter of Nov. 27th, 1905, writes:

"When I took up the Powell System I was drawing a fair income as decorator in a town of 10,000. After only three months' study I doubled my salary."

"I recommend the Powell System because it is clear in details, and deals with each student personally, and because Mr. Powell has all kinds of patience and never tires in instructing."

The Western World, also a leading ad journal of Kansas City, Mo., has frequently published flattering editorials regarding my great work, which will be more thoroughly appreciated from the fact that its talented young editor, Mr. E. F. Gardner, was a Powell student two or three years ago, and he never tires in his praise of my methods. Mr. Gard-

gling of instruction that doesn't belong in true correspondence lessons, but rather in books.

THIRD, I am by general consent universally recognized as the leader, and the prospective student doesn't have to be satisfied with my own statement. *And I teach nothing but advertising*, which can be said of no other school.

The Powell System and the Attitude of Leading Publishers and Advertising Journals.

Before going further I wish to reprint the follow-

SHOWING HOW THE SKILLED AD WRITER IS EAGERLY SOUGHT

Mr. Harry M. Hall, Charlotte, N. C., is another example of what the Powell System can do for the truly earnest young man who spends his spare time to advantage. His letter to a prospective student who was in doubt will give a fair idea of actual conditions:

February 1st, 1906.

W. W. WILLIAMSON, Roanoke, Va.

Dear Sir:—I am in receipt of your favor of January 30th regarding Powell's Advertising School.

There is nothing I can say in praise of Mr. Powell's course that will be too high. I took it up a short time ago and I became so interested in it and was inspired with so much confidence in his ability to teach me the subject that I started in business after the first few months, and have paid my way from the start.

I knew nothing of the subject and my success has been due to his instruction, and whatever I may make out of it in the future will be due to his school.

I would advise any young man that is anxious to increase his income to take up the advertising business. The demand far exceeds the supply and there is no limit to what you can attain in this line. There is no better way to gain the necessary knowledge than by taking this course.

I have an offer of the management of the advertising department of a large dry goods store here and expect to take it up. The fact of this offer being made me speaks for itself in favor of Mr. Powell and his work.

Any more information or help you wish I will be only too glad to furnish. The course has certainly done me good and is doing me good. Therefore, believing in it as I do, I do not hesitate to recommend it in the highest terms to any one.

Trusting that you will receive as much benefit as all of Mr. Powell's men seem to, I am,

Very truly yours, H. M. HALL.

Unsolicited letters of this sort give the other side of the situation, and the comment so commonly heard in business circles, "Powell's graduates are certainly loyal and appear to get there," is not difficult of understanding when the great benefits are even partially realized.



ner is also the head of the copy department of a large agency.

Add all this to the recommendations of such national publications as *THE POPULAR*, *Ainslee's*, *Smith's*, *Everybody's*, *Review of Reviews*, *Public Opinion*, *Physical Culture*, *Judge*, *Puck*, *Leslie's Weekly* and others, and it will be seen that the Powell System is a very important factor in business development, and in pushing ambitious people to the front.

And, moreover, it need scarcely be a matter of surprise that a dozen or more inefficient advertising courses have gone to the wall, to the great good of those most interested—prospective students who stood to lose both time and money without much hope of return.

Of course not every teacher of advertising was guilty, but even many with good intentions were handicapped because lacking skill.

So vital is the matter of training enough bright people to supply the demand that it should almost be a law that the teacher be universally recognized as an expert of high order, instead of allowing the various schools to turn the instruction over to type-writers who "guess" at the stereotyped letters that "may answer."

Leading publishers know that the Powell System is not, and never will be, conducted on such lines.

My instruction is as personal as though I had but one student, and no "circular" or "form" criticism letters are ever used. Youthful clerks or subordinates are not employed as "experts."

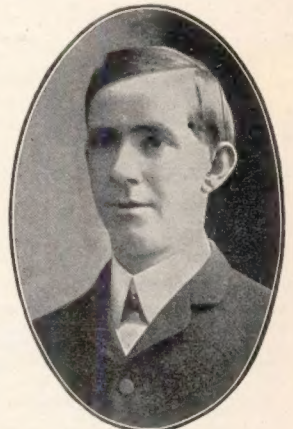
Instead, practical lessons with complete exhibits and analysis are followed by practical ad writing

on the part of the student, and this in turn receives my critical review and real dictated letters of criticism, as each student's work requires. The whole System is extremely simple and effective where the person is endowed with a good brain, coupled with a common school education.

About the Openings for Good Ad Writers and the Remarkable Success of Powell Graduates.

Not only are good ad writers in demand by hundreds of great advertisers, but there is a truly limitless field in minor places where populations are too small to support large stores and exclusive ad writers. Here are good opportunities for the independent ad writer conducting his or her own office. Incomes of \$50.00 a week in places where there are but one or two daily papers are common.

A word as to how Powell students find good, salaried positions may be of interest. Mr. J. W. Lindau, after completing my instruction at Greensboro, N. C.,



M. E. B. McCall, a leading department store proprietor, of Norman, Okla., completed the Powell System a couple of years ago, and his favorable opinion of its benefits strengthens, instead of weakens, as time goes on. He recently wrote Mr. C. S. Berryhill, Kansas City, Mo.

"I believe Mr. Powell can teach any man the art of advertising, if the student will apply himself. There is no other school of advertising in my opinion as good as this one."

The Powell System, too, has vastly increased hundreds of businesses in all lines.

home, came to New York and became ad writer for the Minimex Fire Extinguisher. Later he took the entire advertising management of Stransky & Co., world-famed agate ware manufacturers, and last week he made a still greater connection. About

has just made a deal to become advertising manager for the syndicate of shoe stores operated by Frazin & Oppenheim, New York. I sent him there in response to a request from this firm, and he closed at *double the salary* offered.

More and more are the largest advertisers coming to me for competent men and women, and the confidence and respect for my great work are more than flattering. Two days ago the National Herb Co., Washington, D. C., called for a good Powell graduate, who could manage both the advertising and the factory. A similar demand to that of Swaine's Sanitarium, Cleveland, O., referred to in connection with the portrait of Mr. and Mrs. Smith in this article.

A week or two ago a new Powell student in Pittsburg, Pa., sent me a want ad from the *Gazette* of that city calling for a Powell graduate. He thought I would be interested. I at once answered the ad only to learn that one of my graduates had already been engaged. I reproduce

the ad together with the letter received from the advertising agency.

And I may add that the very largest and best advertising agents in the country are glad to employ my former students, knowing that they are better equipped than is possible through any other system of training.

During the past four or five years I have naturally fitted hundreds of brainy young men and women to fill splendid positions and start offices of their own, and their steadfast testimony in my behalf is valuable.

That the investigator may gain some idea of the feelings of these former students, I am reproducing herewith copies of a number of letters they have written to those thinking of enrolling with me. Simply lack of space prevents the reproduction of a host of similar ones.

Broadly summed up the advertising business is in its infancy, and the enormous strides of American

PROTZMAN-FARRAR CO.

FORMERLY PROTZMAN-BARR CO.

14th FLOOR FARMERS BANK BUILDING.

WRITERS, PLACERS,
PUBLISHERS AND PRINTERS
OF REAL ESTATE, BANK,
MERCANTILE, INDUSTRIAL
AND
POLITICAL ADVERTISING.



GEO. F. PROTZMAN,
PRESIDENT.
VERNON H. WOOLRICH,
VICE PRESIDENT.
DAVID C. FARRAR,
TREASURER & BUS. MGR.
ROBT. M. THOMPSON,
SECRETARY.

PITTSBURGH, PA.

Feb. 5, 1906.

Mr. George H. Powell,

5 Beekman St., New York.

Dear Sir:-We are in receipt of your favor of January 30th, regarding position of advertising writer with our company.

We did not receive any letter from you that we know of concerning this vacancy, but have filled the position with a student of your school, Mr. H. F. Phillips of Pittsburg.

Beg to thank you for your interest in the matter.

Yours very truly,

Protzman-Farrar Co.,

Bus. Mgr.

\$8,000.00 a year is in sight—probably much more. Mr. L. A. Munger, Ozone Park, N. Y., was vainly trying to conduct a little one-horse business about a year or so ago, and enrolled as my student to make it pay better. After completing the course

HELP WANTED—MALES.

AD. WRITER—Wanted, a man graduate of the Powell system of ad writing, who is able to submit creditable examples of his work for examination and willing to take a reasonable salary until he develops sufficiently along the line of our policy to make himself valuable to us. Must be of neat address, trustworthy and not more than 30 years of age. Address Y 22, in care of this paper, enclosing samples of your work.

A.—Wanted, first class bookkeeper for customers' ledger; must be familiar with card system or loose leaf ledger work. Address, stating age, experience and salary expected, Ledger, box 227.

he not only increased his regular business but quickly secured several advertisers as clients, at a good income. To-day he called to tell me that he



H. D. BARTO,
Advertising Expert,
Land Title Bldg., Philadelphia.

Still another example of the high opinion of old graduates of the Powell System is seen in the following:

November 11, 1905.

Mr. L. M. GILBERT,
Lock Berlin, New York.

Dear Sir:—Your esteemed favor of October 6th, addressed to me at Syracuse, N. Y., has been forwarded me here for attention.

I am very glad indeed to learn you are contemplating taking a course of advertising instruction from Mr. George H. Powell, as he is by far the best man in the business and has the knack of imparting his knowledge to others.

There is not a better business on earth than advertising, and for a bright, pushing young man it opens a vast field undreamed of by the average person.

You will find Mr. Powell a gentleman whom you will be glad to know, and I most heartily commend you to him.

Wishing you the best of success, I am,
Very respectfully,
H. D. BARTO.



WILLIAM H. LIDELL,
Advertising Agent,
108 Fulton Street, New York

Jan. 23rd, 1906.

Mr. ED. ZUERSHER,
Paterson, N. J.

Dear Sir:—I am in receipt of your recent favor inquiring about Mr. Powell's System.

You can place full confidence in any statement that Mr. Powell makes in his prospectus, which I would advise you to send for if you have not already done so.

I took this course a year or so ago and found it solid and genuine in every way. The lessons are intensely interesting from start to finish, and I think you should complete the course in a very few months working in your spare time.

You will find Mr. Powell a very fine man, who is always willing to help his students in any way that he can. When you have finished the course he will probably have a position that he can place you in. He did this for me and also a friend whom I advised to take his course. I have found Mr. Powell and his course such a prominent factor in my success that I do not hesitate to tell prospective students exactly what I think of the System.

I believe Mr. Powell's System is the only practical course there is, and you cannot possibly go amiss in taking it up.

Yours very sincerely,
WILLIAM H. LIDELL.



Miss ADELE MCGILL,
Advertising Specialist.

A little more than a year ago Miss McGill, then residing at her home in Louisville, Ky., completed the Powell System, and came to New York during the dulles of the summer months.

Before she had been in the big city a month, she was making an income of about \$50.00 a week. She was also engaged by the Editor of *Printers' Ink* to write a special article for this leading advertising journal on the benefits to be derived from correspondence instruction. Her effort created widespread interest, and in explaining why the Powell System is superior to all others she conferred a lasting favor on all who wish to adopt advertising as the one splendid profession.

Miss McGill is employed as an expert by many of the leading American advertisers, and her thorough training and great ability will continue to be appreciated by business men and advertisers who want every dollar to count.

Her address is No. 1 Madison Avenue, New York City, and she will gladly tell about advertising as a profitable field for the capable young woman.

enterprise will make ad writing possibilities wonderfully attractive to those who want to double and quadruple their incomes. Instead of a billion dollars a year spent for publicity, ten years hence we may look for a fifty per cent. increase at least.

All important industries must depend more and more on the skilled ad writer, and I know of no other vocation that offers so much reward and that enables one to qualify through home study, and without being obliged to throw up the present salary, small though it be, until a new and better opening in advertising appears.

AINSLIE'S MAGAZINE, SMITH'S MAGAZINE,
THE POPULAR MAGAZINE,
Seventh Avenue and Fifteenth Street.

New York, July 21st, 1905.

My dear Mr. Powell:

Replying to yours of July 17th, I want to say that I received "Powell's Practical Advertiser," but have been unable until to-day to look it through, as I have been on the road almost constantly since the book arrived. I want to say that the work far exceeds my expectations. You will remember that you showed me advance proofs of certain parts of the book then in the making, and while I knew that nothing on the subject of advertising would leave your hands in an unfinished state, I really did not expect so complete a treatise on this subject. I congratulate you on its completion, and am certain that it will add to your reputation as the greatest among advertising experts.

Very sincerely yours,

OTTO KOENIG,
Advertising Manager.

This is a mere opinion of the great authorities as to my ability. Powell's Practical Advertiser contains more than ten ordinary courses of instruction. It is distinct from my correspondence course and saves the student valuable time, and is free to all students.

To Progressive Business Men

Good advertising will marvelously increase your business and Profits. If no Powell graduates are to be found in your place, write me. I will tell you how you can become a business-man student and quickly win.

MYERS & HOFFMAN,
Advertising and General Publicity.

Bethlehem, Pa., Feb. 6, 1906.

Mr. J. H. LANEY,
Care of D. L. & W. R. R. Company,
Hoboken, N. J.

Dear Sir:—We have yours of the 25th ultimo and are pleased to say that, naturally, being graduates of Mr. Powell's, and having investigated many other courses before and after completing our studies under Mr. Powell, the best advice we can give you if you consider taking up advertising as a profession, is to become a Powell student.

Yours cordially,
MYERS & HOFFMAN.

STUDY THE TWO FREE BOOKS.

I have two free books to send ambitious young men and women who want more salary and income and to business men who want more profits—

My elegant new Prospectus and "Net Results," the most instructive works of their kind, with the most remarkable fac-simile proof ever published in the history of correspondence instruction.

For the free copies simply address me

George H. Powell, 31 Metropolitan Annex, New York

When writing to advertisers, please mention The Popular Magazine.

A Chat With You

"I NEVER read novels—fiction at all, for that matter." The speaker was a man of about thirty-five, who had been practising law for ten years and was barely able to make a living at it. The scene was a summer hotel, and several in the group looked admiringly at the solemn-visaged speaker, believing, from his self-satisfied appearance, that he must have made a great success in life because of his abstemiousness in the matter of imaginative literature. A stout, quiet man, who was one of the group, smiled, however, and announced that he had always read fiction. He walked away with a copy of a well-known detective story tucked under his arm.



THE stout, quiet man was George Frisbie Hoar, a lawyer of national reputation, a United States Senator, and a man known both in this country and in Europe for the qualities of mental clearness and concentration that brought him success. The man who never read fiction was a failure at the law, and is now a postmaster in a country town. We don't believe, personally, that if he had been a reader of fiction he would have equaled the success of Senator Hoar. We do believe, however, that he might have become a better lawyer if he had broadened his mind and

feeling with the reading of the better sort of imaginative literature.



SENATOR HOAR'S predilection for detective stories is well known, and it is a fact that every one of our really successful men since Lincoln has been a reader of fiction. Any man with an imagination likes fiction of some sort, and no man without imagination can be a big success anywhere. Imagination is what lifts a man out of the position of a machine. Imagination points out possibilities. It is necessary in any creative or original work, be it building a play, a business, or an empire. If you are fond of fiction, be proud of the fact rather than ashamed of it, for you are in good company.



WE feel confident that if a general muster of the readers of THE POPULAR were held we would find the great majority of them forging toward success in their various avenues of life. We don't hold, of course, that success is caused by the reading of good fiction; but we are sure that a love for strong, stirring, virile stories generally indicates a man with red blood in his veins and something of the fighting instinct in him—and that is the kind of man who wins out in the battle of life.

A CHAT WITH YOU—Continued.

IT is the appeal to the strong emotions in a man, to the fighting instinct, to the love of the daring and adventurous, that makes a story or novel vital and telling. The writers who can make this appeal are the writers whom we are getting into the fold of POPULAR contributors. We don't feel quite happy unless in talking to you each month we can tell you about some fresh addition to the ranks. This time we can boast of a writer in a field entirely new to our readers, and in next month's issue you will have the first of his contributions to THE POPULAR.



IT is called "The Law of the Desert," and is a novelette. It is practically the life story of the son of a Bedouin sheik. The atmosphere of the story, the strangeness of its scene, the flavor that it has of the desert, give it an indescribable charm. And, in addition to that, the character about whom the story is written will enlist your sympathies and attention from the start.

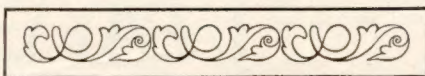


THE other complete novelette in the next number is one that you have been expecting for some time. "Rowdy of the 'Cross L'" is the third complete novelette contributed to THE POPULAR by B. M. Bower. You have read "Chip

of the 'Flying U'" and "The Lure of the Dim Trails." "Rowdy of the 'Cross L'" will take its place beside these classics of the West.



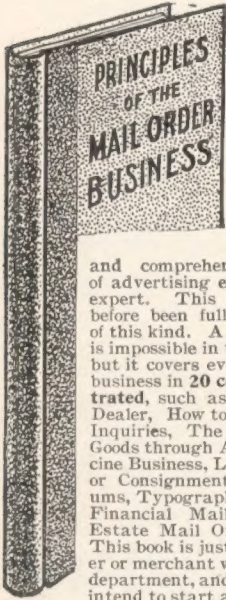
THE series of circus stories which we promised some time ago will open in the May issue with "The Ring-master's Double Rôle." The splendid opportunities offered by circus life, and the ability of Mr. Philip C. Stanton, the author, to grasp these opportunities and make the most of them, are a guarantee that the stories will score a big success. By this time you have read the first instalment of "The Malefactor," E. Phillips Oppenheim's great serial, and are in a hurry to read the second. It is scoring the biggest success of any serial we have ever published. Every one who read the first instalment last month has been impatient for the next number, and this issue goes to press with a much larger edition, to meet the increased circulation. We have already received hundreds of letters praising the story. The best thing about it is that the serial grows even stronger in later instalments. Next month we will have something to say to you in regard to a new series of complete novels which we are going to publish, and which will mark a distinctly new feature in the magazine.



ONE DOLLAR

FOR A COMPLETE MAIL ORDER ADVERTISING COURSE

Biggest Offer Ever Made. Nearly 900 pages of interesting, solid and instructive matter relating to every subject of ADVERTISING in the MAIL ORDER BUSINESS.



IF you are a business man, advertising student, mail order man, ad writer or connected in any way with advertising or the mail order business, send \$1, and take advantage of this offer today. Our handsomely cloth bound book,

Principles of the Mail Order Business

is the most complete, practical and comprehensive book on this branch of advertising ever published; written by an expert. This important subject has never before been fully treated in a special work of this kind. A complete synopsis of contents is impossible in the space allotted in this ad, but it covers every branch of the mail order business in **20 complete chapters, fully illustrated**, such as, The Standpoint of the Small Dealer, How to Keep Records, Following up Inquiries, The Catalogue Business, Selling Goods through Agents, The Mail Order Medicine Business, Legitimate Schemes, The Trust or Consignment Scheme, Advertising Mediums, Typographical Details, Postal Pointers, Financial Mail Order Advertising, Real Estate Mail Order Advertising, Etc., Etc. This book is just the thing for the manufacturer or merchant who wants to add a mail order department, and a valuable guide to those who intend to start a mail order business.

Advertising (MONTHLY)

has for its contributors the most brilliant and experienced advertising men in the world and every conceivable subject pertaining to Advertisement Writing, Space Buying, System, Methods, etc., is discussed in a masterly manner at once interesting to the tyro and convincing to the most experienced advertisers—such as: The Chance for the Small Business, Mailing Cards, The Value of Price in Advertising, Why Booklets Bring Business, Doctors and Advertising, Saving Bank Business by Mail, Retail Advertising in the Country, How Country Merchants can draw Trade, Continuous Advertising, Inactive Advertising Matter, Etc., Etc., and a mass of other interesting matter too numerous to mention. The man who is studying advertising by correspondence will be interested in "The Letters of an Advertising Man to His Younger Brother," which discusses in a series of heart to heart talks the trials, difficulties and temptations that beset the young advertising writer in learning and following his profession. 64 pages, issued monthly, and for \$1, you will receive 12 numbers and a copy of Principles of the Mail Order Business, making over 900 pages in all. This is the biggest bargain ever offered. Send your order to

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When writing to advertisers, please mention The Popular Magazine.

Ainslee's Magazine

"THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS"

FOR APRIL

will contain an assortment of stories, essays, and poems remarkable not only for general excellence, but for originality and variety of theme. It is, on the whole, we think, a little better than March's, just as that number was a little better than February's. We are making improvements every month, and we propose to keep right on making them.

"Capricious Caroline"

by *E. Maria Albanesi*, author of "Suzannah and One Other," is the novelette in the April issue. It is a story with a very original plot, and is brimful of interest. You are sure to like it.



Reduced facsimile of the cover design for April AINSLEE'S
Drawn by Sidney Adamson.

THE SHORT STORIES

"Grim-Visaged War," by *Anna A. Rogers*, is a tale of the Philippines in war-time. "In the Limousine," by *Churchill Williams*, is an automobile story. Others are "Two White Blackbirds," by *Jane Maurice*; "The Lady and the Handicapper," by *P. S. Carlson*; "The Reincarnation of Captain Strabo," by *Joseph C. Lincoln*; "Frankie Proposes," by *Lucia Chamberlain*; "The Truth," by *May Harris*; "Lady Betty's Lament," by *Grace MacGowan Cooke*, and "The Winning of Miss Tillinghast," by *Cyrus Townsend Brady*.

OTHER FEATURES

In a notable essay entitled "The Growth of the Household," *Anne Rittenhouse* disproves the theory that we are becoming a nation of flat-dwellers. *Mary Manners* discourses on "The Easily Divorced." *Channing Pollock*, the well-known playwright, whose play, "The Little Gray Lady," has been one of the successes of the New York season, writes of theatrical matters in his usual entertaining fashion. The department, "For Book Lovers," contains a wealth of information concerning current literary productions, and there are a number of poems quite up to the AINSLEE'S standard, which, as our readers know, is a high one.

THE
PRIVAT-
EERS

is the title of an exciting new serial story by H. B. MARRIOTT-WATSON, which will begin in the April number of the STRAND. It will run for several months.

THE
PRIVAT-
EERS

tells how two Westerners, associated in Chicago finance and Montana mining, carry on, even to the death, one of the most interesting feuds known to financial life.

THE
PRIVAT-
EERS

tells how one of these gentlemen, to wreck the other's hopes, kidnaps and carries off on a yacht one of the most delightful English girls known to recent fiction.

THE
PRIVAT-
EERS

holds excitement in every line and chapter up to the end. And no one can tell such a story better than MR. MARRIOTT-WATSON. He is a master of his art.

THE
PRIVAT-
EERS

will need no introduction after the first chapter. This serial will run only in the STRAND MAGAZINE, beginning next month, and will be the feature of the Spring and Summer season.

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We can train anybody who wishes to learn to make the kind of drawings business men **want** and will **pay for**. We will enable **you** to earn from **\$18 to \$40 per week** in some reliable establishment.

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F R E E

The Technical World Magazine is a new magazine with a new field, different from all other publications. It is not a dry, scientific paper way over the heads of ordinary people, but a live, beautifully illustrated and intensely interesting magazine that appeals to every intelligent man or woman who wants to know **HOW** and **WHY** things are done. It takes up the great engineering events of the day, latest inventions, labor saving devices, etc., and by profuse illustration makes these subjects as interesting as fiction and as instructive as a course at an engineering school.

The Technical World Magazine will not only **post** you on the great engineering enterprises of the day, but will give you valuable knowledge in a simple interesting way, knowledge which you will find useful every day: repairing a lawn mower, running a small engine, doing home carpentry work, installing electric bells, telephones, putting a new valve in the kitchen pump, etc. It shows how hundreds of little jobs may be done at home without sending for the carpenter, the plumber, the mason or the electrician. **It is just the kind of reading for mothers to put in the hands of their boys.** It teaches them how the useful work of the world is done. It inspires them to **DO** useful work.

We know you will want the magazine if you once see it, and all you've got to do to see it is to fill out the coupon and mail it to us with a dollar bill at our risk and we will send you the magazine every month for twelve months.

If you subscribe before **June 1st** we will send you in addition to the current issue of

The Technical WORLD MAGAZINE

your choice of the hand-books listed in the coupon.

If you find you don't want the magazine, just ask for your money back and keep both the magazine and the hand-book for your trouble. That's fair, isn't it?

We could not afford to do this if we did not have confidence in the merit of the magazine. We have taken ten thousand new subscriptions during the last two months on these terms without being called on to refund a single dollar.

We have been able to secure a special edition of these valuable hand-books, on a wide range of practical subjects. They are handsomely and substantially bound in art buckram. They contain from 64 to 96 pages each and are full of practical authoritative information on the subjects treated. Each hand-book has been written by an acknowledged authority and is profusely illustrated with full page diagrams, half-tone cuts, line drawings, etc., and contains valuable tables, formulas, "short cuts," etc. Size of page, 7x9 inches.

WANTED:—We want a live energetic man to solicit subscriptions in this town. Easy work and big pay. Many solicitors are earning \$6.00 a day.

For particulars address,

Circulation Manager, 3325 Armour Ave., Chicago



COUPON—MAIL TO-DAY

Technical World Magazine

3325 Armour Ave., Chicago, Ill.

In accordance with special offer, I enclose the sum of ONE DOLLAR, for which send me your magazine for one year and the hand-book indicated by "X" in list below

Name

Street

City & State

- ☐ Gas and Oil Engines
- ☐ Freehand Drawing
- ☐ Valve Setting
- ☐ Electric Wiring
- ☐ Management Electric Machinery
- ☐ Steam Pumps
- ☐ Storage Batteries
- ☐ Architectural Lettering
- ☐ Hydraulics
- ☐ Electric Railway
- ☐ Masonry Construction
- ☐ Electric Lighting
- ☐ Telephone Instruments & Batteries
- ☐ Telegraphy
- ☐ Indicators
- ☐ Telephone Line Construction
- ☐ Refrigeration
- ☐ Prospective Drawing
- ☐ Carpentry
- ☐ Pattern Making
- ☐ Heating and Ventilating
- ☐ Mechanical Drawing
- ☐ Structural Drafting
- ☐ Pen and Ink Rendering
- ☐ Tool Making
- ☐ The Steam Engine

Popular Magazine, 4-06

Try It At My Expense

--Not Yours

If you are not a reader of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE I want you to become one. I want you to know what it is like, and to know at my expense if the magazine does not suit you. If it does suit you, and the price is right, you will naturally wish to pay for it. There isn't much in the theory of getting something for nothing.

MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE is worth your knowing. It was MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE that led off a dozen years ago in the low price for magazines—ten cents a copy and one dollar by the year. It was the fight we had with a giant News-Company monopoly—that made MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE possible, and that blazed the way for all other publishers whose magazines are issued at the price of MUNSEY'S. But this is too big and too graphic a story to be told in this advertisement.

Munsey's Magazine

Has the biggest circulation of any standard magazine in the world—much the biggest. And it has made it and held it solely on its merits. In a dozen years we have not spent a dozen cents in advertising. We have no agents in the field—not an agent anywhere—we have given no premiums, have lubbed with no other publications, and have offered no inducements of any kind whatsoever. We have made a magazine for the people, giving them what they want, and giving it to them at a right price—that's all. And the people have bought it because they like it and because they could buy it at a right price. Our object in advertising now is to reach a few hundred thousand new readers—people who are not now taking MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE.

A Ten Thousand Dollar Magazine for Ten Cents

Though there are a good many three dollar and four dollar magazines in America, there is none better than MUNSEY'S, whatever the price—not one. There is no higher grade magazine, there is none better printed or printed on better paper, and there is none better or more carefully edited—none better written and few, if any, so interesting. It costs in round numbers about **ten thousand dollars a number** to go to press on MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE. That is to say, if only one copy were printed it would cost ten thousand dollars, but spreading this cost over an entire edition of **750,000 copies**, the amount gets down very thin on each individual copy.

When I first made this price, a dozen years ago, everybody said it was impossible—said we couldn't live—said we were bound to fail. We did live, however, and today are publishing a **thousand tons** of magazines a month, which is fifty carloads. This is more than three times as many magazines as were issued by all the publishers combined of the entire country when I came into the business.

It is because I am so sure of the merits of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE, and so sure it will please you, that I am now offering to send it to you without any money in advance, and without any money at all if it does not please you. I can afford to take this chance, which, as I see it, is a very small chance, because I believe thoroughly in the rugged honesty of the people. The percentage of dishonesty among the citizens of America is far too small for consideration in a business proposition of this kind.

There is no trick in this offer—no hidden scheme of any kind whatever. It is a simple, straightforward, business proposition which will cost you nothing unless you wish it to.

The All-Story Magazine Also Free

I will not only send you MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE, as stated above, but will send you three months free, in addition, THE ALL-STORY MAGAZINE, which is another of our publications. I add this other magazine for two reasons. First, that you may have the choice of two magazines, and second, with the thought that you may want both.

If this proposition interests you, and I hardly see how it could be made more to your interest, kindly fill out the coupon in this advertisement and mail it to me, and you will get the magazines as stated herein.

FRANK A. MUNSEY, New York City:

64

You may enter my name for one year's subscription to Munsey's Magazine, for which I agree to pay you one dollar (\$1.00) at the end of three months, providing I find the magazine to be what I want.

In the event that I do not care for the magazine, I will so notify you at the end of the three months, in which case I shall owe you nothing.

It is further agreed that in connection with this subscription you are to send me The All-Story Magazine free for three months, and that I am to have the option of changing my subscription, if I so desire, from Munsey's Magazine to The All-Story Magazine for the balance of the year.

Name _____

City _____

Dated _____ 1906 State _____

Frank A. Munsey, 175 Fifth Ave., New York

Money in Shorthand

**Expert Stenographers the Best Paid Men and Women.
Princely Salaries Paid Competent Shorthand Writers.
What is Being Done in this Work.**

It is a fact not realized by the masses that shorthand writers, who really know the business, are among the best paid men and women. The court reporter is in receipt of an income of thousands each year. This was shown in Chicago when William E. Curtis, one of the most prominent newspaper men, detailed in the *Chicago Record-Herald* how the men and women engaged in that business in that city were dividing more than \$1,000,000 in fees each year, while one firm—Walton, James & Ford—were doing a business of more than \$100,000 a year writing shorthand.

This lucrative business is not confined to Chicago, but all over the United States men and women earn the princely salaries paid those who are really proficient in that business. The letter shown herewith from James A. Lord is indicative of what the reporters in Texas are doing. Another letter from Walter S. Taylor, official reporter at Duluth, Minn., shows that last year his income was more than \$6,000. S. A. Van Petten and Sigmund Majewski, two young men of but twenty-one years of age, are at the head of a business in the Woman's Temple, Chicago, which pays them thousands of dollars annually.

These are but a few of the hundreds of successful graduates of the Success Shorthand School, Chicago—the only shorthand school in the world presided over by expert shorthand writers. At its head are Walton, James & Ford, the firm which Mr. Curtis said was the largest in the world. Among other successful graduates may be cited:

D. M. Kent, official reporter, Colorado, Tex.
F. C. Eastman, official reporter, Warsaw, N. Y.
W. F. Cooper, official reporter, Tucson, Ariz.
Miss Eva Erb, official reporter, Ogden, Utah.
Warren J. Hannum, shorthand reporter, Lancaster, Wis.
E. C. Winger, official reporter, Point Pleasant, W. Va.
George Ball, shorthand reporter, Grand Opera House Bldg., Chicago.
C. C. Pickle, official reporter, Austin, Tex.
Mary E. Black, shorthand reporter, Ashland Block, Chicago.
J. M. McLaughlin, official reporter, Cedar Rapids, Ia.
G. F. LaBree, shorthand reporter, State's Atty's office, Chicago.

Gordon R. Elliott, official reporter, Mason City, Ia.

Although less than two and one-half years old, this school has graduated more successful stenographers in all lines of business than any other institution in the world. January 15 W. R. Ersfeld, who studied by correspondence at Cohocton, N. Y., was appointed private secretary to United States Senator A. J. Hopkins, of Illinois. Other private secretaries who received their instruction from this school are Ray Nyemaster, private secretary to Congressman Dawson, Washinton, D. C.; W. J. Morey, private secretary to Joseph Leither, the Chicago millionaire; Edwin Ecker, private secretary to John R. Wallace, former chief engineer for the Panama canal, and hundreds of others throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico.

You can learn this expert system at your home. There is no chance for failure, as this school guarantees its instruction, giving each accepted pupil a written agreement to return money in case of dissatisfaction. Beginners are taught this expert system from the start; stenographers writing other systems are perfected for expert work. Cut out the coupon printed below and send today, and you will receive, free of charge, the elegant 48-page catalogue, a copy of the guaranty given pupils,

and newspaper and magazine articles descriptive of how graduates of this school broke all records writing shorthand in reporting a great national convention. If a shorthand writer, state system and experience. Write today; your opportunity may come tomorrow.

**J. A. LORD, Official Stenographer,
19th Judicial District,
Waco, Texas.**

Waco, Texas, Jan. 6, 1906.
**SUCCESS SHORTHAND SCHOOL,
Chicago, Ill.**

Gentlemen—The business handled in my office in Nov., 1905, amounted to \$1,282, as follows
Salary as official stenographer..... **\$150.00**

Transcribing notes in case of R. L. Brown et al.: The American Freehold-Land Mortgage Company, of London, Limited..... **927.00**

Transcribing notes in case of J. H. Moss v. G. C. & S. F. Ry. Co.... **85.75**

Reporting Baptist Convention at Dallas..... **100.00**

Sermons, specifications and miscellaneous amanuensis work..... **11.25**

\$1,282.00

Yours truly,

J. A. Lord

**SUCCESS SHORTHAND SCHOOL,
Suite 184, 79 Clark Street, Chicago.**

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

TOWN.....

STATE.....

Note to Stenographers.—If you will send full name and address, mentioning this periodical, you will receive, without charge, three weeks' subscription to *The Shorthand Writer*, the most interesting, instructive and inspiring up-to-date weekly shorthand magazine in existence. It will cost you nothing for this test subscription.

\$ 2 0 0 . 0 0

IN CASH PRIZES FREE

Other Prizes are Given for Sending us Subscriptions; but **THIS \$200.00 IN CASH PRIZES WILL BE AWARDED ON APRIL 16, ABSOLUTELY FREE, to the persons sending us the neatest correct solutions. : : : : :**

Arrange the 39 letters printed in the centre groups into the names of six cities of the United States. Can you do it? Large CASH PRIZES, as listed below, to those who send in the neatest solutions, will be given away on April 16. **First Prize, \$50.00 in Gold. Second Prize, \$25.00 in Gold. Third Prize, \$15.00 in Gold. Fourth Prize, \$10.00 in Gold. Five Prizes of \$5.00 each. Ten Prizes of \$2.50 each. Fifty Prizes of \$1.00 each—Making a Total of Two Hundred Dollars in Prizes.** Don't send us ANY MONEY when you answer this advertisement, as there is absolutely no condition to secure any one of these prizes. **RULES GOVERNING THE CONTEST**—In preparing the names of the six cities, the letters in each group can only be used as many times as they appear, and no letter can be used that does not appear. After you have found the six correct names you will have used every letter in the 39 exactly as many times as it appears. These prizes ARE GIVEN, as we wish to have our Magazine brought prominently to the attention of everyone living in the United States. Our Magazine is carefully edited and filled with the choicest literary matter that the best authors produce. **TRY AND WIN.** If you make out the six names, send the solutions at once—who knows but what you will WIN A LARGE PRIZE? Any way, we do not want you to send any money with your letter, and a contest like this is very interesting. Our magazine is a fine, large paper, filled with fascinating stories of love and adventure, and now has a circulation of 400,000 copies each issue. We will send **FREE** a copy of the latest issue of our Magazine, to every one who answers this advertisement. **COMMENCE RIGHT AWAY ON THIS CONTEST** and you will find it a very ingenious mix-up of letters, which can be straightened out to spell the names of six well-known cities of the United States. Send in the names right away. As soon as the contest closes you will be notified if you have won a prize. This and other most liberal offers are made to introduce one of the very best New York magazines into every home in the United States. **WE DO NOT WANT ONE CENT OF YOUR MONEY.** When you have made out the names of these cities, write them neatly and plainly and send it to us, and you will hear from us promptly **BY RETURN MAIL.** A copy of our fascinating MAGAZINE WILL BE SENT FREE to everyone answering this advertisement. Do not delay. Send in your answer immediately. Understand, the neatest correct solutions win the prizes. **WE INTEND TO GIVE AWAY VAST SUMS OF MONEY** in the future, just as we have done in the past, to advertise our CHARMING MAGAZINE. We find it is the very best advertising we can get to offer LARGE PRIZES. Here are the names and addresses of a few people we have recently awarded PRIZES: M. M. Hannah, Fernwood, Miss., \$75.00; H. A. Parmelee, Milford, Neb., \$50.00; Kate E. Dunlap, 138 N. Hill street, Los Angeles, Cal., \$50.00; Mrs. E. Preister, Richmond, Tex., \$55.00; M. G. Christenson, Gregg, Minn., \$50.00; Mrs. C. E. Welting, 1330 Lauderdale street, Memphis, Tenn., \$50.00; Mrs. Harriet S. Bulard, 120 Intendencia street, Pensacola, Fla., \$40.00; J. C. Henry,

Box 118, Sligo, Pa., \$25.00; Henry Perry, Central Islip, L. I., N. Y., \$25.00; James A. Cooter, Holden, Mo., \$25.00; Evelyn S. Murray, 132 S. Central Avenue, Austin, Chicago, Ill., \$25.00; Mrs. L. D. Pinnerberger, 340 West Forty-fifth Street, New York City, N. Y., \$20.00.

We could go on and point to hundreds of names of people who have gained large sums of money from our contests, but only give a few names. The solution can be worked out by an alert and clever person, and it will amply pay you to TRY AND SPELL OUT THESE CITIES. Brains and energy nowadays are winning many golden prizes. Study it very carefully and let us see if you are clever and smart enough to spell out the cities. We would rather take this way of advertising our excellent Magazine than spending many thousands of dollars in other foolish ways. We freely and cheerfully give the money away. **YOU MAY WIN.** We do not care who gets the money. **TO PLEASE OUR READERS IS OUR DELIGHT.** The question is, Can you get the correct solution? If you can do so, write the names of the cities and your full address plainly in a letter and mail it to us, and you will hear from us promptly by return mail. Lazy and foolish people neglect these grand free offers and then wonder and complain about their bad luck. There are always plenty of opportunities for clever, brainy people who are always alert and ready to grasp a real good thing. We have built up our enormous business by being alert and liberal in our GREAT OFFERS. We are continually offering our readers RARE AND UNUSUAL prizes. We have a big capital, and anyone can easily ascertain about our financial condition. We intend to have the largest circulation for our high-class Magazine in the world. In this progressive age publishers find that they must be liberal in giving away prizes. It is the successful way to get your Magazine talked about. Of course, if you are easily discouraged and are not patient and are not willing to spend any time in trying to work out the solution, you certainly cannot expect to win. **USE YOUR BRAINS.** Write the names of the cities and send them to us, and we will be just as much pleased as you are. We desire someone to be successful, and as it does not cost you one cent to solve and answer this contest, it will be very foolish for you to pass it by. In all fairness give it some of your leisure time. **SUCCESS IS FOR ENERGETIC AND THOUGHTFUL PEOPLE, and the cause of FAILURE IS LACK OF INTEREST AND LAZINESS.** So, dear reader, do not pass this advertisement without trying hard to make A SOLUTION OF THE LINES OF LETTERS PRINTED IN THE CENTRE OF THIS ADVERTISEMENT. We suggest that you carefully read this offer several times before giving up the idea of solving the puzzle. Many people write us kind and grateful letters, profusely thanking us for our prompt and honest dealings. It always pays to give attention to our grand and liberal offers. **OUR PRIZES** have gladdened the hearts of many persons who needed the money. If you need money you will give attention to this special offer this very minute. If you solve it, write us immediately. **DON'T DELAY. WE WILL GIVE OTHER PRIZES THIS SEASON.** Get your name on our list and win a prize. Do not delay. Write plainly

This is the Puzzle

O	G	A	C	H	C	I
N	O	T	S	O	B	
E	L	S	E	T	A	T
A	H	O	A	M		
T	I	D	O	E	R	T
L	A	N	T	A	A	T

Can You Solve It?

ADDRESS

THE HOPKINS PUBLISHING COMPANY
22 NORTH WILLIAM STREET, NEW YORK CITY

The Road to Success

LEARN TO WRITE ADVERTISEMENTS



W. P. PERKINS

conducting a highly successful advertising business in New York City, was past forty when he realized the great opportunities in this business and enrolled with us.



M. ANNIE POAGE

advertising manager for the Daily Independent, Ashland, Ky., was reporter on a newspaper before she prepared for advertisement writing with the Page-Davis Company.



I. W. IRWIN

advertising manager for the Daily Independent, Ashland, Ky., was reporter on a newspaper before he prepared for advertisement writing with the Page-Davis Company.

The question with every man whether he owns a business or is employed at a salary is "HOW CAN I INCREASE MY INCOME." If he possesses common-sense and has a common-school education, the question can quickly be solved, providing he will look into the matter intelligently. The excuses men make for themselves constitute their greatest obstacle to success. It doesn't cost anything for you to find out THE VALUE TO YOU OF A PAGE-DAVIS ADVERTISING COURSE; to find out why hundreds of men and women who were working for as small an amount as \$12.00 a week are to-day, after COMPLETING A CORRESPONDENCE COURSE WITH THE "ORIGINAL SCHOOL," MAKING \$2,000 AND \$3,000 A YEAR. If you will stop for a moment's thought, you will see that there must be a reason for such rapid advancement. If you could be in my office for one week, and read the ENTHUSIASTIC LETTERS FROM SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS, you would then wonder how it is possible that other men and women postpone the study of advertising. You could read letters from clerks, stenographers, bookkeepers, and men in every known vocation who are stepping OUT OF THEIR NARROW CONFINES INTO \$25.00 TO \$100.00 A WEEK POSITIONS AFTER HAVING LEARNED ADVERTISING. Not in one case alone, not in a hundred cases but in thousands of instances. You would also realize the need for men and women trained to write advertisements, because there is a continual and ever-growing demand for efficient advertisement-writers. ADVERTISEMENT WRITING IS THE MOST FASCINATING BUSINESS IN THE WORLD AND THE MOST PROFITABLE ONE AS WELL. Send in your name and we shall be glad to demonstrate to you how thousands of men and women have increased their incomes from 25 per cent. to 100 per cent., and we will also tell you what we can do for you. It is a straight-forward business proposition where there is nothing to lose and everything to gain. Fill in the coupon, and mail to-day. You will receive by return post, our large, beautiful new prospectus, which lays the whole field before you, so plainly and practically, that you can see opportunities for yourself.

The most successful concerns in the world have put PAGE-DAVIS men in charge of their advertising departments, because they know the character of this institution. The two largest piano manufacturers in America have employed PAGE-DAVIS men to manage their advertising. One of the

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The Prudential

Advances in Security and Public Confidence.

THIRTIETH ANNUAL STATEMENT, JANUARY 1, 1906, SHOWS

Assets, over	107 Million Dollars
Liabilities (including Reserve \$88,000,000)	91 Million Dollars
Surplus, over	16 Million Dollars
Increase in Assets, over	18 Million Dollars
Paid Policyholders during 1905, over	14 Million Dollars
Total Payments to Policyholders to Dec. 31, 1905, over	107 Million Dollars
Cash Dividends and Other Concessions not Stipulated in Original Contracts and Voluntarily Given to Holders of Old Policies to Date, over	
Number of Policies in Force, nearly	6½ Million
Increase in Number of Policies in Force, over	1½ Million
Net Increase in Insurance in Force, over	113 Million Dollars

Bringing Total Amount of Insurance in Force to over
**One Billion One Hundred and
Seventy Million Dollars.**



ECONOMICAL ADMINISTRATION.

LOWER EXPENSE RATE THAN EVER
BEFORE.

CAREFUL SELECTION OF RISKS.

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Dividends Paid to Policyholders
During 1905, Over
ONE MILLION DOLLARS

THE PRUDENTIAL INSURANCE CO.
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Incorporated as a Stock Company by the State of New Jersey

JOHN F. DRYDEN, President.

Home Office, Newark, N. J.

Write for Information of Policies, Dept. 95

THE POPULAR MAGAZINE

VOL. V.

APRIL, 1906.

No. 6.

Faraday Bobbs, Free Lance

By Louis Joseph Vance

Author of "The Blood Yoke," "The Private War," Etc.

"Faraday Bobbs" is a hustling, devil-may-care young American whose occupation as staff-photographer for a big daily newspaper takes him to various parts of the world. He is impulsive, and not always careful to follow instructions, so he frequently gets into trouble—all of which makes very interesting reading. Mr. Vance is at his best in fiction of this type, and in our opinion the present series shows a distinct improvement over anything previously written by him.

L—THE CHANCE HE THREW AWAY

(A Complete Story)



USH! That man is listening!"

"Which? The one with the paper?" There was the accent of incredulity in the woman's voice; her words were followed

by a brief pause, during which Mr. Bobbs surmised that he was being overlooked thoroughly. Then:

"I don't believe it," continued the woman calmly. "Besides, he looks like an American. It's unlikely that he should understand Russian."

"Best to run no risks," growled the man's voice surlily. "What a homely brute he is!" he added.

"Oh!" the woman expostulated.

The man laughed nastily. "So you're afraid he may understand, after all, eh? Well, we'll soon know." He raised his voice and spoke deliberately,

with cutting insolence. "All Americans are pigs!"

At this Mr. Bobbs folded his paper and put it aside, without noticeable haste. Then, turning, he looked across the narrow space between him and the nearest table in the Cecil's breakfast-room.

His glance met squarely the bland, unconscious, well-bred stare of the woman; and he was sensible of a little flutter of surprised appreciation in his thoughts. He was always grateful for pretty women; they were so good to look upon; the artist in him was sensitive to all human beauty. Customarily, however, he was content to feast his vision only. He was old enough—just turned thirty—and of sufficient knowledge of life to pride himself upon immunity to feminine wiles, and—worse yet—was rather glad of it.

But here was an exceptional woman

—his first glance furnished assurance of that fact. She was of the English type, her ancestry unquestionably limned in the glowing hue of her cheeks and in the contour of features whose purity of line was almost classical. Unlike the majority of her sister countrywomen, too, she knew how to dress herself to advantage—neither art nor money had been spared to provide a suitable setting for her fine looks, though both her gown and its appointments were in quiet—indeed, in the most exquisite—taste.

But of all this the young man was only vaguely aware—her wonderful eyes held him—eyes largely wistful, rendered but the more beautiful by their expression of gentle, abiding melancholy, that would have held Mr. Bobbs the longer had he not been so thoroughly incensed.

As for the man, her companion, Faraday appraised him with a look as brutal as a blow, under which the fellow reddened and scowled sulkily.

He likewise might have been English-born, though there seemed to be a suggestion of Slavonic blood in his thin, bearded, pallid face, with its black and eager eyes—eyes not only eager, but oddly informed with a look furtively apprehensive.

Quietly Mr. Bobbs turned away from the two, and, with a nod, summoned his waiter.

"You may bring my bill," he said clearly, in excellent Russian; and immediately afterward translated his desire into English.

He was conscious that the woman started, with a little gasp; that the man stirred uneasily in his chair. Oblivious at least outwardly, Bobbs produced a cigar and began to smoke. When the waiter had returned, and the American had settled his check, he arose, accepted his hat—the broad-brimmed, neutral-tinted Stetson, that stamped him unmistakably for a man from out of the West—and, turning to go, paused by the opposite table.

"It might soothe you," he said suavely—this time in English, addressed directly to the man—"to know that I was

not listening to your conversation, my friend. Permit me to suggest, however, that you might select a more secluded spot for your confidences. Thereby you will sidestep the necessity for insulting strangers."

A gust of passion shook the man before him; Faraday saw the blood crimsoning the narrow face to the brows; the black eyes shone ominously. Strangely enough, the American remained unawed; his expression, if anything, denoted mild amusement, tinged with some contempt. With a negligent shrug, as of one who has performed a disagreeable duty, he was turning away when a hoarse whisper stayed him.

"Insolent!"

Mr. Bobbs paused. His eyes narrowed. "Steady there, my friend!" he advised sternly.

"If it were not for causing a scene——"

"Don't let that worry you," Faraday interposed, in the same even, imperturbable tone which he had used from the beginning. "Go as far as you like, stranger. Of course, we haven't been introduced any, but you can take it from me that I'd just as lieve pull your nose right here and now, as if we were bosom friends."

"Sir——!"

"Sergius!" pleaded the woman, placing a restraining hand upon the man's arm. She disarmed Mr. Bobbs with an appealing glance. "Please go!" she begged gently. "Believe me, I am sorry——"

"Madam!" The Westerner bent a back that would have been a credit to a finished diplomat. "Accept my apologies and regrets. I am sincerely sorry that this—er—gentleman"—Faraday swallowed hard—"made me forget myself—and you."

With that he left them, somewhat shamefaced, but turning to the world an impassive composure. He was glad, nevertheless, that the altercation, brief as it had been, had been conducted in tones discreetly modulated. The little passage, he saw without appearing to see, had excited no comment whatso-

ever on the part of the other occupants of the room.

II.

But Mr. Bobbs, you are to understand, was not a man to appear wishful to escape the consequences of his words or deeds. He wandered not far. If the bad-tempered gentleman, with the pronounced dislike for Americans, had desired a further exchange of compliments with the gentleman of the nation slandered, he could have been accommodated—Mr. Bobbs idled away the ensuing hour in the lounge of the Cecil, ostensibly absorbed in the *Times*—which really he found dry as dust—but with an eye on the adjacent corridors. However—

"I'll bet," engaged Mr. Bobbs with himself—"I'll bet you the drinks that he doesn't peep. And I'll give him sixty minutes to show up."

He didn't. And at the end of the stipulated period Mr. Bobbs arose and wended his way, in solemn adherence to the terms of his wager, to the so-called "American bar." "I never welch," he announced oracularly, to the white-jacketed dispenser of damnation.

"Hi beg yer pardon, sir?"

"And," snorted Mr. Bobbs, with disgust, "they call *this* an American bar!"

The cause of his emotion regarded him with manifest distrust, the while he jiggled a long-stemmed spoon against the side of the glass.

"Shall Hi put a holive in hit, sir?" he asked tentatively.

Gently but firmly Mr. Bobbs pushed the glass back across the mahogany. "No," he sighed. He found a shilling, and placed that beside the glass. "No," he murmured, resigned but saddened. "You take it, stranger. It'll commingle with your constitution better'n with mine, I reckon. I'll bet you"—his gloom lightened slightly—"half a dollar—I mean two bob—whatever you call it—that I couldn't swallow a cocktail with a haitch in it, or an 'ighball that lacked one, without choking. No? Very well. It's too early in the morning to drink, anyhow."

Despondently, if with a twinkling eye, he wandered out and—met his erstwhile asperser face to face. Faraday paused and gathered himself together; but one glance sufficed—the man stepped back swiftly, hesitated an instant, and disappeared with commendable discretion and alacrity. Mr. Bobbs sauntered into a lift, and had himself conveyed to his room.

"I wonder," he announced inwardly, "what devilment that chap is up to?"

He removed his coat and hat, thoughtfully packed and lighted a disreputable corn-cob pipe, and flung himself at full-length upon the bed. "Blame' pretty woman!" said Mr. Bobbs.

The affair held his interest oddly. Mentally he reviewed it again and again; and remembered. A chance word or two, a phrase, an incomplete sentence that unconsciously he had overheard, returned to his mind. He frowned, vexed that this should be the case; he had had no thought of eavesdropping—no purpose to do so, for that matter. Up to the moment that the man's sharply hissed warning had drawn his attention from the printed page before him, Faraday had been all but oblivious to the presence of the two so near him. Now, however, reluctantly he began to recall.

"'Odessa,'" he repeated, perplexed. "'Odessa . . . uprising . . . revolutionary committee.' *H'm!* 'Beginning of the end'—I'm sure he said that. Of course, there's no law against discussing affairs Russian in this God-forsaken land, but when folks don't want to be overheard, why, it's sure some mysterious!"

And this remaining unprotested: "Doesn't seem likely that a woman of *her* stamp could be mixed up with nihilistic schemes, but you can't sometimes always generally tell. No—I wonder what's doing down Odessa-way?"

He found a newspaper and searched its columns painstakingly. "Labor agitations," at length he announced thoughtfully. "Now, if the gentle union-man is fixing up to play progres-

sive hell down there, it would certainly be to my advantage to be an innocent bystander."

Faraday was trained—self-trained—to think quickly, to decide quickly, to accept without murmur the consequences of his abrupt ways. Now he sat up suddenly on the edge of the bed, drew an English sovereign from his pocket, and sent it whirling to the ceiling. "Heads," he said—"Odessa. Tails—my assignment."

The coin fell noiselessly on the counterpane. Mr. Bobbs bent over it with some visible interest. "Heads!" he cried. "That settles it!" And, rising, he began to rummage in his traps for a Bradshaw.

Presently he straightened up, the red-bound guide-book in one hand, a thin, black, morocco-covered volume in the other. At this latter he stared, pondering dubiously the inscription on the cover:

Private cable code, for use staff correspondents, *Bannister's Weekly*.

It was not unlikely, Faraday reflected, that Bassett might take it to heart if his staff-photographer, newly engaged and presumably then on his way to St. Petersburg, should cast instructions to the winds and wander off "on his own hook." But—"Oh, well, it was heads, anyway—I've got to chance it. There's more opportunity for live stuff down there—a fool can see that—than in St. Petersburg. Bassett won't grieve if I make good." On the other hand, undeniably, it involved risking a steady job on the slender chance of retrieving himself by securing "exclusive" material.

His ultimate decision, however, was promptly forthcoming—indeed, it had existed since the tossing of the coin. To this day it may be seen in the archives of the illustrated weekly publication which, at the time, had the honor—however scantily appreciated—of carrying Faraday Bobbs on its roll of salaried employees. It is in the shape of a cablegram, couched in brisk phrases of the American vernacular, perhaps a trifle lengthy, but to a clear

point, and entirely in keeping with the sender's characteristic disregard of expense—especially when cabling "collect":

FREEBOOTER, N. Y.: Nothing doing St. Petersburg. Will tour Black Sea ports instead. Looks like trouble Odessa.

BOBBS.

Having despatched this, with a prayer to "rush," Mr. Bobbs returned to his room and began to overhaul his photographic paraphernalia, humming a little, drawling tune—"My Lulu Gal," if you would know—out of the corner of his mouth unoccupied by the pipe-stem. His manner was elated, if of abstraction; his long, slender, brown fingers almost fondled his treasures—wonderful stereoscopic picture-machines, huge enlarging cameras, smaller "snappers," as he called them, fitted with lenses beyond price; plate-holders, tripods, telescopic lens attachments, trays, graduate glasses, pestles, frames, racks—Heaven knows what not in the bright lexicon of photography! Bobbs lingered lovingly over them all, selecting, discarding, judicially weighing the virtues of this or that.

But finally, having wrapped his films into one compact bundle, which he labeled in three languages—"Licht-empfindlich! Udalitia ott Svieta! Sensitive to light!"—all heavily underscored—he placed them apart, together with such articles as he deemed indispensable to his purposes, and bundled the remainder into a huge, iron-clad trunk, equipped with massive locks and strong straps.

Then looking up his certificate of membership to the Russian Photographic Society—without which one may not with safety use a camera in the czar's domains—he was relieved to find that it had still a month to run. An examination of his passport, however, confirmed his suspicion that it needed revisé; and Faraday prepared to leave the hotel, with the Russian consulate in Great Winchester Street as his immediate objective-point.

Those preparations were simple in the extreme, consisting mainly in turning down his cuffs, resuming his coat,

and lifting a rakish hat from its roost on the bed-post.

As he affixed his hat carelessly upon his head, however, Faraday, smitten with a disturbing thought, paused and gazed meditatively in a mirror.

He was confronted by the counterfeited presentment of a youngish man of moderate inches—conspicuous neither for height nor shortness of stature—in fact, of the human conformation journalistically stereotyped “middle-sized.” This mediocrity, however, was offset by shoulders notably broad, to say nothing of an alert habit of the head and eyes which invested their owner with a distinctive manner of his own, both independent and straightforward.

The said eyes were grayish, of good size, rather far apart and clear—remarkably so. They illumined a face whose full color the four winds of heaven had overlaid with an ineradicable wash of tan. The nose was full and strongly arched, the brows level, forehead wide, hair hesitant between brown and red, and in a chronic state of disorder—unruly. The mouth were best described as sensitive—the lips, the least trifle thin, a shade too wide, with an engaging upward twist in their corners, which, together with the laugh that ever lurked behind the eyes, informed Mr. Bobbs’ expression with a quality of odd humor; something quizzical.

By custom, the outward man was at its norm—Bobb showed signs of comfort, despite a suspicion of shabbiness. Clothes, indeed—begging occasions of state—formed the least of his troubles. He favored sack business-suits, which were always, even if new, rather saggy as to the pockets, but which seemed inexplicably to belong to him as do not the clothes of most men. On another, it is conceivable, Faraday’s attire might have seemed a shade past the age-limit—Faraday did not precisely wear it with an air, but rather with a hint of thorough intimacy. As a rule, all other features of the outward man were remarked by the casual, before the facts that his coat was shiny at the seams and under the forearm; his trousers

commodiously misshapen as to their knees.

From all of which it will be evident that the remark which he had resented, as applying to Mr. Bobbs in person, and not as a representative of his fatherland, was not wholly without foundation—if superfluous. He was not handsome. He laid no claim to personal pulchritude. But women have been known to characterize him as picturesque, men as—“a good sort.”

It was not, therefore, vanity that held him before the mirror, nor was it the mental consideration, “I need a new suit,” which most frequently brings men to a standstill before looking-glasses. It was, in brief, abstraction; Mr. Bobbs was ruminative, amused, a thought perturbed. The shadows deepened in the corners of his lips.

“Yes,” he admitted aloud; “I guess I had better wait until Boss Freebooter”—and here he referred to his putative chief, Bassett, who chose to masquerade under that apt “nom de cable”—“gets his mad down and answers my message. I bet you anything he’s unpleasant to be thrown amongst at this date of writing!”

And at that moment, with the appositeness of coincidences which, contrary to popular conception, is not entirely peculiar to the stage and the romantic novel, the summons of a bell-boy at his door warned Bobbs that he had not long to wait. He invited the youth to enter, signed for the message, opened it with some apprehension, and deciphered its brusk intelligence with the aid of the code-book:

Proceed at once St. Petersburg as ordered. Violation of agreement means instant discharge. Why don’t you use code?
Signed, FREEBOOTER.

“Well,” mused Mr. Bobbs, “it looks as if I’ll have to deliver the goods if I have to agitate Odessa all by my lonesome.”

And with the cold comfort of this thought, Faraday went forth into London and bought him a through-ticket to Odessa, via the Hook of Holland and Berlin. Later, he sent the following communication:

FREEBOOTER, N. Y.: Too late. Too bad. Have bought ticket Odessa. Wire further instructions care Hôtel de Londres there. Sorry, but your code's too involved.

BOBBS.

Significantly, the outrageous impertinence of all this did not disturb him in the least; he was complacently intent upon having his own way and holding his job at one and the same time; Bassett, he knew, would condone any crime committed in the name of a "beat."

And, besides, had not the sovereign indicated the decrees of his destiny, irrevocable and immutable?

By habit, Mr. Bobbs ordered his affairs and went his ways at the behest of the God of Chance; and whether the Fates cast his lines in pleasant places or the contrary, the young man made no murmur. "A man has just naturally got to take chances if he wants to get anywhere," sagely Mr. Bobbs epitomized his philosophy. "And," he would continue, "it's against nature to figure that red will come up every turn of the wheel. You can't win all the time."

It was something ingrained in his nature, this worship of Chance—something that, like his perfect and impeccable independence, had been blown into his nature by the free winds of his beloved Western plains, much as the name of the maker is blown into a glass bottle. Combined with his inordinate ambition, his perfect equanimity, and his otherwise sane outlook upon life, this quality had worked to raise him to a position both enviable and envied in the corps of professional photographers, whose fine audacity and ingenuity provide a picture-hungry world with wonderful records of its most moving phases.

Bobbs, indeed, was a name to conjure with in circles editorial; its owner, even, cheerfully confessed that the mention of it was calculated to "get a rise out of" two-thirds of the editors of New York and London. His cheerful, brusk, and hearty independence was something abominable to an editorial mind when taken in conjunction with his unqualified and admitted irresponsibility.

For Bobbs worked or—didn't—as the spirit moved him. He has been known to obey orders implicitly for months at a time, until his temporary employers were lulled into a sense of false security; when, at a crisis, abruptly he would cast instructions, imperative commands, threats, plaintive entreaties all to the winds, and wander insouciantly off in pursuit of a will-o'-the-wisp fancy.

That this fancy strongly approximated a sense of intuition like that by popular superstition—and Heaven knows with what cause!—believed to be peculiar to the sex; that Faraday's disobedience more often than not bore fruit in the shape of photographs amazingly exclusive—no other professional having been ass enough to have hung around the identical spot where something wonderful was going to happen without giving warning—these considerations pleaded scant excuse for him.

In consequence, Mr. Bobbs was by turns penniless and footloose, under copper-riveted contract, and opulent. To the outer world—and he was incredibly candid—both phases of his existence seemed equally agreeable to him. Reasoning placidly from experience, he believed that so long as he lived he would find him food for his belly's need, shelter for his head.

All else were but trimmings upon life, when all was said and done.

III.

It bade fair to be a dirty night upon the Channel. It was windy by convulsive fits and starts; a thin drizzle made slippery the decks; the gloomy distances were smudged with fog. Few passengers were above to see the last of England.

As the tub of a passenger-steamer lurched out from Parkeston Quay at Harwich, Mr. Bobbs found himself alone upon its forward promenade-deck. For his own part he had no quarrel with the weather; he rather liked it. With coat collar turned up to his ears, and hat jammed firmly down upon his brows, he stood in the lee of the wheel-

house and puffed a cigar, from whose glowing tip the spasmodic wind whipped streamers of sparks. The salt tang was sweet in his nostrils. He was at peace, now that he was really bound where he preferred to go; even the memory of the cable-despatch received from "Free-booter" that morning—the one following his decision to go to Odessa—to the general effect that he might consider himself fired if he didn't accomplish something extraordinary brilliant, had not power to dampen Faraday's even flow of spirits.

As usual with him when his mind was at ease, Faraday was extraordinarily sensitive to external impressions. It was with a quickening thrill of foresight that he heard the tapping of high heels coming up behind him on the deck. Somehow he knew beforehand that the woman who was to pass would prove to be the woman of the Cecil's breakfast-room.

He was not misled. She stepped briskly past, eyes straight ahead. Her profile was one not to be mistaken even in a multitude.

"Well!" ejaculated Faraday—inwardly. "This is—luck!"

From his tone, however, one would not have gathered that he honestly so regarded the rencounter.

Were they to travel far in company, he wondered! Was it possible that she, too—

She took a stand well forward, leaning gracefully upon the rail, facing the east. Her pose suggested eagerness, her eyes an hunger. The wind whipped her skirts smartly and lashed an errant tress of hair across her face; she hugged her raincoat about her, and, to replace the truant strands, raised a hand in which something white fluttered.

The white something slipped away and fell at Faraday's feet. He retrieved it, and advanced with the intention of restoring it to its owner. She turned and observed him; her glance swept his face, and the rich color left her own; she stepped back with a little cry of dismay: "Oh!"

"Pardon me—your handkerchief," said Faraday courteously.

She put forth a tremulous hand and took it swiftly. But he was puzzled to account for the expression of the eyes that never left his face.

"So!" she cried abruptly, "you *were* listening, after all!"

"I, madam? You are in error," Faraday declared, with an open smile calculated to disarm suspicion.

"But you—you are following me."

"That," mused Mr. Bobbs inwardly, "would naturally be her one best bet." Aloud—"You lose," he countered—and caught himself; continuing: "Believe me, madam, this is all a coincidence. If you will permit me—I am Faraday Bobbs, staff-photographer for *Bannister's Weekly*—"

She interrupted wildly: "But you are mistaken—you must not follow me!" Her ears seemed to have been deaf to his words, her mind oblivious to their meaning.

"I did not realize that I was," said Mr. Bobbs, "though I couldn't be blamed," he added.

But his gallantry was altogether misplaced in conjunction with her momentarily growing agitation. And he realized this and forebore.

"I am not going to Odessa, sir—indeed I am not!"

"Odessa!" said Mr. Bobbs, in consternation. "But *I* am!"

Her eyes widened as with terror, and she fell away a pace, so that he added hastily: "On private business for my paper."

For an instant the woman seemed deprived of her wits; then with a splendid effort she pulled herself together. "Ah," she said more calmly, "I see. Pardon me for misunderstanding—I am a bit unstrung, I fear."

It was entirely apparent that this fear was only too well-grounded. Bobbs frowned in sympathetic contemplation of her distress. "Madam," he said straightforwardly, "can I be of any service to you? Command me, if you will. I don't want to appear to seek your confidence, but any one can see you are in deep trouble, and I—well, I reckon I can do some things that you couldn't—"

She gave him pause with a little appealing gesture. "Thank you," she said gently, now more the mistress of herself; "you are most kind. But—but I am truly only a bit nervous. Will you forgive me and——"

"Certainly," said Mr. Bobbs, reading his dismissal in her tone.

Yet he hesitated an instant, seeking her eyes, finding her wistful and weary smile altogether charming; but still in the depths of her eyes that odd light quivered, and he knew that he beheld a badly frightened woman.

"Why?" he asked himself vainly, when he had left her. What did she fear? What had been said that yesterday morning so terrible that the belief he had overheard it should shake her so?

Faraday lifted his brows over this, and gave it up. He was at some pains, however, to tip the steward to discover the woman's identity.

She proved to be a Mrs. Bracket-West. This conveyed little information to Mr. Bobbs; but considerably he effaced himself during the remainder of the voyage. He saw enough of the woman, however, to know that they journeyed together as far as Berlin. There he lost her, and himself hurried Odessa-wards by the Cracow route.

IV.

The expressive shoulders of the Jack-in-office seemed instantaneously to touch the lobes of his ears as he pondered Faraday's papers; and as swiftly they subsided to their normal bearing. He smiled loftily; rustled the papers with an air of importance; frowned thoughtfully at Mr. Bobbs; and made an entry in a little book.

Bobbs waited his august pleasure with a patience born of the knowledge that absolute submission is the only course open to one who desires a favor of the Russ.

"Monsieur's credentials are perfect," admitted the official, a shade regretful, using the diplomatic tongue of France. "Staff-correspondent and photogra-

pher," he quoted. "May I inquire monsieur's purpose here?"

"To write stories and get pictures," explained Mr. Bobbs obviously.

"Ah, yes—to write and to take photographs. Indeed yes. Monsieur may go where he will, follow his pleasure, but—with the camera—alas! no." And compressing his lips he looked unutterably important.

"The devil you say!" ejaculated Faraday, dismayed. "That does me a lot of good! I must——"

Again the miracle of the shrug was brought about for his benefit. "I am desolated," returned the official politely; "but it cannot be helped. Odessa is under martial law, and the taking of photographs expressly prohibited. I can do no more for you except—one moment." He lapsed into profound deliberation, studiously ignoring Mr. Bobbs' active hands. "But you shall have a military pass," he announced, at length. He scribbled something on a bit of paper. "Take that to the headquarters of General Karangozoff, and a pass will be issued in monsieur's name."

"A thousand thanks," said Mr. Bobbs. "You avaricious little purp!" he commented in English. The man nodded graciously, a faraway look in his eyes as he abstractedly pocketed Faraday's tribute of rubles.

Bobbs escaped to the street, rumbling with volcanic wrath, but aware that there was no help for it; he must accept such restrictions without remonstrance. Disobedience, he knew, would involve arrest, possibly imprisonment, certainly deportation to the frontier—with the pleasant prerogative of paying the railway fares of the guards that escorted him that far!

"But," announced Mr. Bobbs, "I'll get those pictures or bust a gallus. I'll bet my job that I get 'em."

Pondering ways and means, he proceeded to the military headquarters, applied for and received his pass visé by the commander-in-chief, and wandered out, still abstractedly debating his problem, into the genial warmth of a summer's afternoon.

Odessa enjoyed a perfect day; one

neither too warm nor too cold. The sky was cloudless, a dome of sapphire whose depth of hue was only rivaled by the intense blue of the Black Sea, enchanting glimpses of which were visible from the Nikolayevsky Boulevard.

By rights the people should have been abroad, to a soul enjoying the matchless perfection of such weather. As a matter of fact, the city presented the appearance of being in a state of siege. An ominous silence brooded over the town. Few wayfarers ventured upon streets whose every corner sported the green of a Cossack's uniform or the white coats of infantry pickets. The police and the gendarmerie skulked on every hand, and the infrequent citizen-pedestrian scurried along in haste, exhibiting a marked preference for the spots unoccupied by the forces of law and order.

Faraday, however, was but little annoyed. Once or twice, it is true, he was halted by guards; but the showing of his pass procured him liberty and respect. He was, in truth, free to wander where he would. From his present viewpoint of an interested onlooker, his rubles had not been wasted.

He made a leisurely progress toward Cathedral Square, where there had been rioting the previous day. Across the entrance a picket of troops barred his way. Beyond them he could see an infantry regiment, bivouacked around stacked arms.

At the request of a magnificently ornamented young officer, Bobbs again produced his pass. This captain—a straight, well set-up, handsome young fellow, with a candid eye and an engaging air of camaraderie—inquired the nature of the American's business, was enlightened, and cigarettes were exchanged. Bobbs passed through the lines in company with his new acquaintance.

"Yesterday's rioting?" replied the latter to a query. "*Pouf!* It was nothing—or, rather, it was mere butchery. They are fools, these strikers—brave, perhaps, but sheep. The Cossacks attended to them. I am told it was nasty work. I am glad we were not here."

He jingled his sword-belt, muttering something about a distaste for slaughtering unarmed men.

"Well," admitted Mr. Bobbs, "myself, I'm sure some cast down to have missed it."

"You, monsieur? You would have found it sickening. Of course, when it is in the way of one's vocation—I understand. You might come to-morrow; we hear rumors of another demonstration. The people seem to prefer this spot for dying."

"Thank you 'most to death; I'm just nuts on being gunned up, myself," returned Faraday dryly. "From a safe place, now, say, one of those houses, I wouldn't mind." With a gesture he indicated the residences fronting on the square.

"Their owners were of a contrary opinion, monsieur. Almost to a man, they have removed to the country, pending the settlement of this trouble."

"They're a-plenty sagacious, at that. And you think there will be more fighting to-morrow?"

"I am sorry to say that it is almost a certainty."

"And I'm invited? Thanks awfully—I may accept."

Presently Mr. Bobbs found an excuse to get away, and hurried from the square—but only to circumnavigate the block and enter an alleyway, whence he might inspect the rear elevation of a residence which he had furtively remarked as admirably suited for his purpose. "It is sure considerate of the owner to light out and leave me a clear field," he announced mysteriously; "I do believe I'll take a chance at it. Of course there's some risk—but to get snap shots of a Russian mob in action——!"

He returned to his hotel, profoundly thoughtful—so much so that when he heard, at dinner the same evening, the news that a Russian battle-ship, the *Kniaz Potemkin Tavrichesky*, had arrived and dropped anchor in the roadstead—presumably in response to the city's frantic appeals for aid from Sebastopol—he was only listlessly interested, although almost guilty of a

sneaking hope that this fresh development might not interfere with the threatened demonstration.

And when it was quite dark, Mr. Bobbs might have been seen—but, fortunately for him, was not—dexterously forcing a window in the rear of the residence he had inspected earlier in the day.

His success as an amateur cracksmen exhilarated him; the house, entirely deserted, proved ridiculously easy to break into. Its upper windows commanded a splendid view of the square; and he watched for some time the infantry regiment below him—conspicuous figures of men in their white tunics beneath the blazing arc lamps.

Unburdening himself of a camera and three loaded plate-holders, which he had smuggled out of his hotel, Faraday secluded them in the house, walked boldly out of the front door—it was held by nothing more formidable than a night-latch of American make—passed the line of sentries, exchanged a greeting with his amiable captain, and went home to bed, quite satisfied with his night's work.

V.

The shape of new-born Fear greeted the American at breakfast, when he read portents of panic in the cowed faces and pale, trembling lips of the waiters. Gaunt, hideous Rumor stalked, a dreadful specter, forerunner of a new reign of terror, through the cool peace of the young morning; it rubbed elbows with Faraday as he hurried out into the streets; kept step with him as he mingled with the groups of citizens converging upon a common center—the port proper, below the white city—"down below," Odessa calls it.

At the base of the Richelieu Monument, which crowns the gigantic stairway from the cliffs to the port, the young man found himself brought to a standstill by a dense mob, its numbers momentarily augmented by fresh arrivals. Diplomacy and his broad shoulders wormed him through to the

front ranks, where he stood looking out to sea at the squat, deformed shape of the *Kniaz Potemkin*.

In the light of early dawn that trembled in across the eastern waters she seemed a harmless, leaden toy, her size diminished by perspective. Yet as rumor grew, and the increasing radiance made visible her long rows of grinning teeth, she assumed an aspect at once frightful and menacing. And at her masthead fluttered, for all men to see, the dread confirmation of the rumor—the red rag of anarchy, ensign of mutiny and death.

The crew had risen, Faraday heard with incredulous ears; to a man it had murdered its officers; it was to issue a manifesto declaring the dawn of liberty and equal rights, the inception of the long-heralded revolt that was to spread like wildfire across the steppes of that sullen land, bringing freedom to the down-trodden, relief to the oppressed.

Odessa lay helpless, terrorized, threatened with bombardment if the authorities attempted to molest the mutineers; threatened with a worse thing from within—mob-rule, continuance of rioting, incendiarism, and presently—a *Jacquerie*!

Faraday's heart sickened within him at the prospect—and he was not squeamish.

As he looked and listened, a launch put off from the battle-ship and slowly steamed into the harbor, with flag at half-mast. Incontinently the crowd pushed forward, rushing Faraday with it whether he would or no, down the staircase to the lower city, beneath the elevated railway structure, and out upon the New Mole, where the launch was making a landing.

An armed guard of marines cleared a space at the end of the mole; they were half drunk for the most part, and talked freely with the populace, loudly and boastfully confirming the news. More, they had brought with them the cause, and the first fruits of their uprising—the corpse of a comrade, a sailor who had been shot down by an officer for protesting against the qual-

ity of food rationed out to him and his fellows.

Hastily a rude pavilion of spars and tarpaulins was thrown together; the body laid out in state in its shelter; and the citizens invited to pass in review and read the inflammatory placard pinned to the dead man's blouse.

The protests of the police, half-hearted, ineffectual, were swiftly hushed by the temper of the mob. They retired at discretion. Faraday followed, making swiftly for his hotel. Now the hour was late for that which he had contemplated accomplishing in the pallid light of dawn; there were precautions to be taken that had been superfluous ere this untoward event. Foreseeing with a clear vision what the following days might bring forth, Faraday packed his few belongings and shipped them to Budapest. The camera secreted in the vacant house was but one of his stock; at a pinch it could be abandoned. Himself he burdened only with a tooth-brush, his credentials, and a telescopic lens attachment for long-distance photography.

In the next hour he visited the municipal offices, announced his intention of leaving the city, obtained the requisite police endorsement of his passport, and bought his ticket for Budapest on the next following train.

Careless as it may seem, Mr. Bobbs was guilty of the negligence of missing that train. With its departure from the city, he became a person without standing in the community, a suspect in the eyes of the police, if his presence there became known to them. It is significant that he manifested neither annoyance nor perturbation; on the contrary, he kept himself perfectly cool—and discreetly in the thick of the crowd.

Toward noon a sinister grumbling announced the inception of rioting in the lower town. Now and again a shot would split the unnatural quietness of the cowed city. Faraday looked down upon the scene of the disturbance from a safe spot on the cliffs; the rabble, he saw, was having its own sweet way, secure in the consciousness that the

guns of the battle-ship would support it, did occasion arise.

Moreover, it now became known that the putative success of the mutineers had emboldened the crew of torpedo-boat No. 267 to rise and murder its officers. During the day, the lesser war-ship commandeered a Russian coal-collier and a tug, and escorted both out of the harbor to coal the *Kniaz Potemkin*. In the evening they were returned, their crews drunk to a man, and to a man enthusiastically whooping for revolution. Also, they brought back with them another insolent and threatening message from the mutineers.

The rioting, which had slackened for want of a definite object, fanned into fresh flame; warehouses on the mole were forced and rifled. The fat Karangozoff, who had seemed dazed, drugged with amazement, shook off his stupor and took drastic action; troops were rushed from every quarter to guard the approaches to the lower city.

Faraday presently saw his captain of infantry doubling along the boulevard by the side of his company; and the American deduced that the square would be unguarded, the time then ripe—dusk having fallen—for his nefarious enterprise. He would have hastened at once to the house save for the actions of the license-maddened mob “down below,” inspired to fresh outrages by every passing instant of unrestraint. Just at nightfall the spirit descended upon it, and the torch was lighted; amid cheers, building after building was fired; in an incredibly brief period the water-front was aflame from end to end.

Far out the waters blushed, mirroring that lurid hell from whose blazing heart a pillar of smoke and steam ascended straight in the still, night air, to spread out miles above, a lowering, blood-hued pall. Through its shifting curtain of fiery vapor, Faraday caught glimpses of steamships burning at their piers—steel hulls glowing like white-hot ingots—and of others unharmed but hastily making for the open sea.

A pandemonium of sound lashed the air until it quivered—shrill, inhuman screams and yelps, shock and crash of falling walls, hiss of escaping steam, dull and thunderous detonations as the flames licked through to stored explosives.

And then, as the American turned and, fascinated, stared down upon the one dark spot in the blazing pit—the areas of the Quarantine Harbor and the custom-house grounds, where troops were stationed—he became aware that the work of retribution was under way. Crashes of volley-firing came to his ears; and he recognized a new note in the voice of the people—a change from the thick and heavy chuckling of unrestrained savagery wreaking its will to the piercing cries of a fear-smitten rabble.

As he waited, the first rush of refugees stormed the giant stairway and was greeted with a withering volley from the guardian Cossacks at the top. Men, women, children were shot down—deliberately, ruthlessly, without discrimination—innocent sightseers, for the most part, these first comers.

In the twinkling of an eye the stairs became a shambles. Nor was this the worst—the mob behind pressed resistlessly against the foremost, driving them like cattle to the slaughter-pen; and every shrieking charge was sent reeling back, down into the inferno of the mob's own making.

Nor was there escape for any. Every avenue, every passage, every loophole from the doomed port was guarded by troops instructed to shoot, and to shoot to kill, whoever approached.

At length, faint with horror, the American turned and went his way back into the silent upper city, the white city that crowns the cliffs—back to the deserted residence on Cathedral Square.

VI.

A sullen growl of kettle-drums roused Mr. Bobbs from a night's slumbers, haunted by recurring visions of

the massacre he had witnessed, a passive spectator.

Yawning, he slipped off a couch in the front room of the mansion's second story, and strode to a window. Peering cautiously through the slats of the blinds, he beheld a Cossack regiment—an impressive array in their long green cloaks—debouching from the boulevard into the square.

It was early—barely dawn. Bobbs left the Cossacks to their own devices and foraged in the larder of the mansion. He found little—a few crusts—but sufficient to his simple needs. Afterward he ascended to the roof.

Over Odessa had dawned a day bright with sunshine and clear as crystal. The sky came down to the far-tossing waters of the Black Sea; a sharp, clean-cut line. Cirrus clouds, few and fleecy, drifted slowly near the zenith.

Faraday glanced sharply about him, and was relieved to find that, as he had calculated, his building stood higher than any of its immediate neighbors. His figure might not be discerned by any sightseers near enough to remark its appearance on the roof of a deserted house. For that matter, there was some comfort to be garnered from the fact that there was, at the time, none other occupied of all the roofs that, like the graded steps of a giant's causeway, fell away in slow perspective to the abrupt line of the harbor's cliffs.

Faraday grunted businesslike satisfaction, disappeared, and returned with the camera and a plate-holder. A low chimney-pot served well for the tripod he did not have. Adjusting the telescopic attachment, he focused it upon the rebel battle-ship. The *Kniaz Potemkin* rode far out, scarlet badge of infamy fluttering idly at masthead in the gentle westerly breeze that swept the intervening atmosphere clear of fumes and reek from the still smoldering lower town.

Torpedo-boat No. 267 was moored not sufficiently near its ponderous consort to come within the picture; Faraday was obliged to use two plates—but four were left. The vessels photo-

graphed, he vacated the roof with the greater haste, since now he saw the harassed city awakening to another day of fear and trembling. Already servants were astir in some of the houses in the rear, and escape was cut off in that direction during the daylight hours.

Faraday, however, was content with the situation as it stood; he purposed waiting for the night, in any event. Presently he exposed a third plate, snapping the bivouacked Cossacks from between the curtains of the upper window, whence he had observed their advent.

Leaving the machine there, in position, a new plate ready for emergencies, he settled down to loaf out the long hours ere the prophesied demonstration, judging from the bearing of the Cossacks that he would have grim work to picture when the time came. Those troops, he fancied, had an ominously alert and warlike air.

Inaction wore upon his exuberance. He invented an unsatisfactory, if exhaustive and plaintive, diatribe against all Little Russians who elected to riot after sundown, when an honest photographer might not unlawfully catch them in the act. And he smoked rather more than was good for him: The knowledge that history was making rendered him ill at ease, though the day advanced quietly enough—punctuated by but few and scattered shots. The fearful lesson administered the rioters the night before had apparently quenched their ardor to some extent—or else they awaited the friendly cloak of darkness ere resuming their work.

But early in the afternoon he observed an unwonted stir and bustle in the Cossack ranks. Horses were brought up; the men mounted and fell in. After a brief delay bugles sang, and they faced about with clattering hoofs, to trot across the square to the cathedral, where they wheeled again and formed in two long lines parallel with its façade; and waited motionless, impassive, stern, like a regiment of equestrian statues.

A sound, at first no more than a vague murmur, was making itself felt in the unnatural stillness; it grew, swelling like distant thunder on the breeze. The Cossacks did not stir; but Faraday saw their eyes glittering ominously in their fierce, bearded faces. As for himself, he grew conscious of disquiet; the dull insistence of that sound, like the low growling of a prowling beast, seemed verily to clutch at one's throat.

It gained swiftly in volume, resolving into a deep-throated roar of many voices, with an incessant undernote of shuffling feet. A straggling vanguard of ragamuffins shambled into the square from the boulevard. A disorderly mob of men and woman, boys and girls, offscourings of Odessa's vilest slums, pressed at their heels. They streamed across the square, shouting, cursing, and reviling the immobile Cossacks, threatening them with brandished clubs and stones.

Faraday used a fourth plate, a little disgruntled because of the peaceful character of the demonstration—unaware as he was of what had taken place in the morning hours. This, however, he was soon to surmise, and that accurately.

Hardly had he adjusted the third and last plate-holder to the camera and withdrawn the slide, preparatory to taking a snap shot, if events warranted such extravagance, when, above the heads of the surrounding hordes, he saw a hearse advancing into the square. In its wake trudged fifteen mutineers from the *Kniaz Potemkin*—conspicuous in blue uniforms and rakish caps.

"Umm," meditated Mr. Bobbs; "that's the funeral cortège for that poor devil I saw down on the mole yesterday morning. Judging from the size of it, he certainly was a whole lot popular. . . . I guess they threatened to bombard if the burying was interfered with."

In essentials he was right.

Leaning forward over the camera, breathless with interest, one finger a-tremble on the shutter, Faraday became aware of a disturbance in the

center of the throng behind the blue-jackets. He heard a shrill howl as of warning, saw a swirling movement of the people, caught the glare of sunlight on naked steel as the Cossacks suddenly quickened, drawing their swords.

As if swept aside by gigantic, invisible fingers, the rabble scattered, leaving a clear space in its midst—a space occupied alone by two figures—that of a man, who ran haltingly toward the waiting horsemen, waving something in his hand; and of a woman, who seemed to pursue him; a slight and graceful figure, whose hands strained toward the man's shoulders, as if to clutch and hold him back.

He threw her aside roughly, paused an instant, then flung violently that which he held toward the Cossacks.

Faraday's finger bore down upon the shutter.

There was a crash, a roar, a small, dense cloud of yellowish vapor where the bomb had landed. It cleared swiftly; Faraday saw a score of gruesome shapes, formless heaps that had been living men and animals but the moment gone, clattering the space before the cathedral entrance. In that instant the scene was indelibly impressed upon his mind—even as synchronously it was caught by the sensitive plate in the camera. He saw the slaughter-pen, the thunderstruck mob, the man who had thrown the bomb poised dramatically with folded arms, as if inviting annihilation; the Cossacks gathering up their reins—all in instantaneously arrested action. But he saw clearly, above and before all else, the livid and despairing face of the woman who had seemed to try to stay the hand of the bomb assassin.

And, "Good God!" quoth Mr. Bobbs, in horror. For the woman was Mrs. Bracket-West, and the man had been her companion in the dining-room of the Hotel Cecil.

Somehow the American discovered himself suddenly upon the door-step of the deserted residence. The door was open behind him. Dimly he comprehended that he had dashed down the

stairs at the imminent peril of his neck, as incoherently conscious that he was about to place his life in danger infinitely greater. There was no vacillation of purpose in him; but one clear thought—the knowledge that a young and beautiful woman, of delicacy and refinement beyond the average, was out there, lost in the mazes of the rabble, at the mercy—though it were bitter jest to term it so—of the Cossacks.

Faraday hurled himself headlong into the press, fighting his way toward the spot where last he had seen her.

And now the storm had broken; the Cossacks, mounted, armed, and equipped, were falling upon the people like ravening wolves, rabid to avenge their comrades' deaths. The swords that once arose clean, and fell, rose again a hundred times crimson to the hilt. Red retribution stalked amongst the people; panic chilled their hearts. They turned and fled in terrified groups and clumps—stumbling, wailing.

The majority made for the seaward entrance, where the boulevard widened into the square, but only to fling themselves against a wall of bayonets in the hands of a regiment of infantry—that seemed to have sprung miraculously from Death alone knew where. Hemmed in on that side, they turned and sped headlong in the opposite direction, following the hearse and the mutineers, who had already passed out of the firing zone. But there again they were late—terribly late—a battery of machine-guns had wheeled into place, unlimbered, and was already sweeping the square.

The infernal chattering of the artillery added to and dominated the mad din. The Cossacks mowed red lanes through solid masses of humanity. The tide swept this way and that—insanely, purposelessly; he who fell was lost, trampled to pulp in an instant by the thousands of rushing feet; he who remained erect became a target for the leaden hail of the rapid-fire guns.

In this wild stampede, Faraday was caught up and buffeted hither and thither like a chip in a whirlpool; if he

still thought to find the woman, he was indeed mad who found himself as helpless to control his movement as a child in arms.

Yet Destiny works strangely; in an eddy of the torrent, as he stood, breathless and dazed, the woman was flung like driftwood, inert and barely sentient, toward him. He caught her in his arms.

Their eyes met—hers without recognition. He understood that she was hardly conscious, half-crazed with fear. And—and the comprehension seemed to endow him with new strength, for a time with almost supernal clearness of mind.

He caught her closely to him, lifting her in his strong arms, lowered his head, and fairly butted a path through the rabble toward the house—his tower of refuge.

It seemed hours ere he gained its portals. By then the woman had altogether fainted and hung a dead weight upon him, while Faraday was bleeding from a slight flesh-wound in the shoulder—his coat and shirt fluttering in ribbons behind him.

VII.

He kicked the door to; it failed to latch—and ere he could rid himself of the woman, the door was violently dashed open, and a man with the face of a maniac precipitated into the hallway. Shrieking, he stumbled along a few steps, staggered, fell, recovered, and fled cursing through the house. Another followed him, and another—an endless chain of fugitives pursuing one another to the haven of safety in the rear alley. If he had had the ability, Faraday had not found it in his heart to bar their way of escape.

It was but another difficulty. He weighed it judiciously, composure returning to him quickly in this time of desperate need. "I certainly am up against it," he affirmed, with pardonable conviction.

There was but one way out of it, so long as Mrs. Bracket-West was in his charge. Sighing, he drew upon his

reserve strength, lifted her again in his arms and, with set teeth and straining lungs, staggered up the staircase to the second floor.

Depositing his burden upon a divan, he hastened to secure the hall-door; then, safe, at least temporarily, from interruption, gave his attention to the task of restoring the woman to her senses.

It proved beyond him. There was no water handy, and he dared not leave her. With groaning anxiety he loosened the collar of her dress, and gently chafed her hands and temples. She did not respond. After some minutes, during which she showed not the slightest symptoms of returning animation, he left her for an instant to go to the window.

Below, in the square, the butchery continued. Nauseated with horror, he turned his back, shuddered, and tried to think.

With each passing moment their ultimate escape became a problem more abstruse. Alone, perhaps, he could have compassed it; the camera he was resigned to abandon; the plates would not make a bundle large enough to impede his flight.

But such a plan, involving abandonment of the woman, never entered his mind; it was a mental and a physical impossibility for the man to conceive such a course. Yet by lingering he fully realized he imperiled not alone his life, but his livelihood and—most dear to him—his prestige.

"Hell!" he panted, mopping his brow with a ragged shirt-sleeve. "If my luck holds to get me out of this with my hair on, I—I'll take a course in First Aid to Females in Distress—something that I'm persuaded should form part of every war-correspondent's education."

Even in his solicitude for the woman, the humor of the case might not evade him.

She stirred, moaning faintly, and flung an arm across her eyes as if to ward off a threatened blow. In a twinkling he was by her side. "Mrs. West—madam!" he said gently. "Don't be

afraid—it's all over now, and you are quite safe, believe me."

His voice roused her, if she did not respond to his meaning. With a little cry she sat up on the edge of the divan. Immediately her eyes, wide and staring, closed; and she would have toppled over had he not caught her. "Steady, there; steady!" he murmured.

She came to herself with a convulsive start. Considerately Mr. Bobbs released her. For a moment her eyes blankly searched his face. Then he saw the nails that tipped her slender fingers sink deep into the soft flesh of her palms, as she strove to steady herself; and Faraday honored her, knowing that he beheld a woman of more than common nerve and courage.

"Who are you?" she demanded tensely. "What is this place? How did I come here?"

"I am Faraday Bobbs, madam, representing *Bannister's Weekly*. You are in an upper room of a house on Cathedral Square, Odessa. I brought you here."

"Bobbs? Then I know you. Where? when?"

"I had the honor of being your fellow-passenger on the channel boat, Mrs. West."

"Oh!" she continued, in the same high-strung tone and manner. "You are the man who—who——"

"Whom you suspected of spying on you? Yes, madam."

She shuddered, closed her eyes. He fancied that she was about to faint again, and held himself ready; but she sat motionless—save that her bosom rose and fell violently. After some minutes——

"Ah!" she whispered. And then, more firmly: "Sergius——"

"Who——"

"Yes."

She nodded, with compressed lips white as chalk and eyes still closed. Faraday hesitated. He guessed vaguely at the truth, presently to be revealed to him. Yet he felt it were best that she should know the worst at once. And "Dead," he said quietly.

"Oh!" She cowered as though he

had struck her. "Oh!" she cried again pitifully. "Are you sure—sure?"

"I saw them cut him down," he replied, with unsparing compassion.

She uttered a little low cry of anguish and turned her face from him, trembling like a leaf in the wind. He waited patiently—but time pressed. For her sake, if not for his own, he felt compelled to force the issue.

"Are you strong enough to walk? We are not yet out of danger——"

Her reply was uncomprehending; she seemed almost as if talking in slumber. "Out there—I fainted—— Then—what happened? You saved me?"

"By accident."

"I have no words to thank you."

"I need no thanks, madam, beyond the assurance of your safety."

"You mean to leave here? I will try. Give me but a moment more. I cannot think. Ah, the horror of it!"

A pause, which she broke suddenly and sharply: "He was my husband."

"He?"

"He was half Russian and—a nihilist. I never knew, nor even dreamed, of such a thing until—until he was chosen for this dreadful work. Even then he tried to hide it from me, but my suspicions were aroused. I guessed part, discovered the rest. That morning—at the Cecil—he was leaving. He made me promise not to follow, but—but I could not stay. I came and—and hunted him through the streets all that dreadful night. I did not find him till to-day, and then"—she broke into a tempest of terrible, passionate, dry sobbing—"then—too late!"

She calmed herself abruptly. "Forgive me, I talk wildly! I am terribly shaken——"

"Madam, my heart bleeds for you."

"But—we must go. I am ready."

Faraday's smile became briefly whimsical. "All bets are off," he said abstractedly. "Listen."

In the square the clamor had subsided to some extent; now the tramp of many feet might be heard ascending the stairs. "The gendarmerie," Mr. Bobbs answered the woman's look. "Well, I

reckon it's good-by to my plates all right," he considered to himself. And then, electrified by a sudden thought: "One moment, madam," he cried hastily. "You say you owe me your life. Promise me this!"

"Anything!"

"We are liable to be arrested, detained, or shown the door—deported, I mean. Promise me not to acknowledge, under whatever pressure, that you knew—your husband. If you do admit, you'll be implicated with the crime, thrown into prison, eventually—Siberia!"

"Oh, I promise," she breathed, terrified: "I promise."

There came a rattle of the door-knob and a heavy knock, on the heels of which a voice demanded in Russian that the occupants open in the name of the czar.

Faraday looked at the woman, perturbed; then lifted his shoulders helplessly, stepped over, and turned the key. The door swung open. A file of gendarmes passed through, followed by a fat and suspicious sub-lieutenant—a little, puffy, important figure of a man, with bright, cunning cruel eyes.

He appraised the situation acutely, then addressed Mr. Bobbs rudely.

"Who are *you*?"

"I, monsieur?"—in accents of surprise. The American's eyes twinkled drolly out of an immobile countenance. With a courtly bow he produced and handed over his credentials. With a half-concealed sneer, the sub-lieutenant inspected them.

"And this woman?" he pursued.

"This lady is Mrs. Bracket-West; an English subject, monsieur."

"Her papers?"

"At my hotel—De St. Petersburg," the woman interposed.

"Then what are you doing here?" insisted the lieutenant triumphantly, wagging a fat forefinger under Bobbs' nose.

Mr. Bobbs stared openly, fascinated, apparently, by the vibrant, majestic finger. Eventually, however, he detached himself sufficiently to respond, with intense courtesy: "Madam was caught in the mob. I saw her from the

window, and went to her assistance, bringing her back here."

"Indeed!" sneered the man. His ratlike eyes cast about the room nervously. They fixed upon the camera; and bulged. Their owner pointed mutely, his fat jowls crimson and quivering with indignation.

"*That!*" he exploded.

"My camera," assented Faraday.

The sub-lieutenant gasped. "Does not monsieur know," he inquired, with cutting irony, "that it is forbidden to take photographs at the present time?"

Faraday's astonishment was acute. "Is it?" he murmured. "How fortunate!"

The sub-lieutenant puffed and roared: "Fortunate!"

"Extremely—that I have taken none."

"You ask *me* to believe that?"

"I will prove it to monsieur," said Faraday meekly. He took up the plate-holders.

Twenty minutes ago he would have given his life to preserve them. Now he would have given his life to destroy them. If they fell into the hands of the police and were developed—Mrs. Bracket-West was lost.

Faraday saw again the scene in the square at the instant of the final snap shot; and the woman's white and agonized countenance was clearest in it all. Truly, for the moment he held her fate in his hands; her damnation was latent in those harmless, unlined plates behind the light-tight slides.

"What are you going to do, there?" demanded the sub-lieutenant of gendarmes quickly, suspicious.

"Prove my innocence, monsieur—with your gracious leave. Behold!"

Before he could have been stopped, Faraday had whipped the slides from all three holders.

"The plates, you see," he declared, with charming ingenuousness, "are blank."

And with daylight stark upon them, he was justified in assuming that they would be forever blank.

Now, as Faraday had assumed—who

had had prior demonstrations of official intellectuality in Russia—the sub-lieutenant was wholly ignorant of the first principles of photography. Yet he sensed a trick. His brows gathered, darkening.

"I believe you are trying to deceive me," he said, with pompous bluntness. "But we shall see. At all events, you must cross the frontier this night, monsieur. You are under arrest. My men will gather up this stuff and hold it as evidence against you." He indicated, scornfully, the camera and the plates.

"As for the lady," he continued, "two of you will accompany her to the Hôtel de St. Petersburg and secure her papers—if she tells the truth. At least she will be detained until she proves her identity. Monsieur the 'staff-photographer'!" he thundered savagely at Faraday. "Are you ready?"

"Quite at your service, stranger."

Faraday meekly took his place between two gendarmes and marched to the door. On the threshold he paused and turned.

"Mrs. West," said he, very gently, in English, "until we meet again—you will believe in my sympathy?"

The woman bent toward him, her face for the moment illumined. "I do believe!" she cried. "Ah, but I do, Mr. Bobbs. You are the truest——"

Her words were lost to him as the guards unceremoniously shouldered him through the doorway.

The woman saw him go, with eyes blurred by tears of gratitude. Yet she guessed no tithe of his real sacrifice, of which the final rites had been enacted beneath her eyes.

Faraday, however, was a prey to no illusions. Philosopher, fatalist, devotee of chance that he was, he could have wept for the ruined plates—his pitiful offerings before the altar of Necessity. "I reckon," he mused, as the guards left him at the frontier, early the following morning, "I'd better be rustling another job. You can take it from me and play it straight for all you're worth, Boss Freebooter will presently be on the still-hunt for another staff-photographer."



IN A WESTERN MINING CAMP

HERE is a true wedding story. It is vouched for by a human rolling-stone, who has revolved round the world during his checkered career.

The beauty of the mining camp was led to the altar—a plank table in the open air—by Bronco Bill, the gentleman of her choice. The wedding was not popular in camp—in fact, everybody but the contracting couple, the groom's best man and "pardner," and the minister, who worked his own claim, objected. The lady's father also objected, but feared his prospective son-in-law's revolver too much to say so.

When the minister reached the words——

"If any man can show just cause," the bridegroom interrupted with——

"Hold hard, parson!"

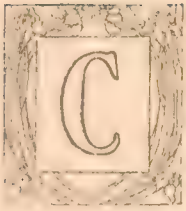
He lugged out two revolvers, and trained them upon the congregation. The best man produced, cocked, and pointed his pair of Colt's at us; the bride suddenly blushed shyly over the barrels of another pair; and the parson, in an abstracted way, laid a pistol on each side of the prayer-book.

"Go ahead, parson!" said the bridegroom. And the ceremony proceeded decorously to the end, none of us showing any cause why Bronco Bill and his bride should not be lawfully joined together.

In Sheep's Clothing

By A. M. Chisholm

Mr. Chisholm herein entertainingly describes how, through the benevolence of a total stranger, a retired sea-captain was accorded an opportunity of investing in a gold-mine which was undoubtedly of fabulous richness, but which has as yet paid him no dividends



CAPTAIN ÆNEAS BINKS sat before the cheerful glow of a hardwood fire, holding gray-stockinged, slipperless feet to the comforting blaze. A carefully blackened "ram's-horn" clay pipe occupied the extreme left corner of his mouth; beside him, on the table, stood one glass, a decanter, a sugar-bowl, a nutmeg, and a file; a copper kettle steamed on the hearth.

The captain's hired man, cook, and general factotum, had retired to indite his semi-annual, painfully scrawled letter to a sister "out West," and Captain Binks was alone with his household gods.

Around was the ordered neatness that comes of years of small quarters, lacking femininity. The captain's training had impressed on him the true meaning of the "place-for-everything" maxim.

When he retired from the chances of the open sea, with a comfortable bank-account and certain well-paying investments whereof the genesis was no man's business, he built a house upon the lines suggested by his marine experience, having more regard to the problem of stowage than to the accepted theories of decoration of interiors; everything stowable was stowed, and what would not stow hung on pegs, racks, and screw-hooks. The result was utilitarian, if not esthetic.

Also, the captain had surrounded himself in his living-room with the trophies of a lifetime. Strangely carved wooden implements of obscure uses

decorated the walls; sea-shells and ship models cumbered mantel and shelf; there were harpoon-heads, walrus tusks, and human-teeth necklaces; a presentation set of binoculars hung side by side with an ancient ship's pistol.

Persuasive and elusive through the scent of the captain's tobacco came strange, warm smells, the lingering breath of placid lagoon and fronded palm, mingled with the acrid odor of the smoke-tanned skins of the North.

Nor was art forgotten. Marine views, showing ships under a press of sail on wonderfully blue, white-flecked seas, were plentiful. These were evidently the work of amateur hands, and the execution was faithful in detail to the last rope and rivet—not one was out of place, and there were no anachronisms. On the other hand, their blue-jacketed crews, gazing imperturbably overside, bore a distinct resemblance to the toy representations of the ancient mariners—Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Also the colors were primary and startling.

Captain Binks was making up his accounts—a process which involved much hard smoking and judicious irrigation. On the whole, the result appeared to be satisfactory. Arriving at a summary of his finances, the captain held it to the light and, cocking his head on one side, eyed it admiringly.

"I'm getting too much cash drawing only bank interest," he soliloquized. "It don't pay me. Mortgages is slow, too. I'd be almost tempted to close in with Steve Logan's offer and try the opium again, if it wasn't for the risk.

These cussed revenoo men make it so it's hard to get fair profits."

The captain snorted in disgust. His eye resting on the decanter beside him, he proceeded, scientifically, to mix sugar, hot water, lemon peel, and Jamaica, finishing with a top-dressing of nutmeg, procured by rubbing the nut on the file.

The drink thus evolved he sipped slowly, casting a morose eye on a flagrant water-color of a small schooner. Her ribs at that precise moment lay buried in the sand twenty miles south of the mouth of the St. Johns River, and her sea-going career came to an end by reason of the destruction of a pine-tree.

The tree stood lonely on a sand-dune, and you lined it up with another, solitary on a hill two miles inland, and you kept your bowsprit on the line; by so doing you got deep water. The first tree blew down, and the schooner, too hard pressed by a neutral-painted box of tricks and quick-firers flying perpendicular stripes to be particular about landmarks, piled up on the shoal.

A norther was blowing at the time, and she broke up rapidly. She was not insured, and the result of her haste had been to deprive Captain Binks of an investment, as well as of anticipated large profits. His loyalty to his country barely withstood the test, which he regarded as an unwarranted and unpardonable interference with the ancient and inalienable rights of mariners.

A blast of wind howled mournfully past the cottage, and the rain pattered shrapnellike on the shingles. Captain Binks, hitching his chair closer to the fire and lighting his pipe, meditated—an occupation which was immediately interrupted by a knock at the door.

Being deliberate of thought and motion, the captain did not at once respond. When he did, at a repetition of the demand for entrance, it was with an emphatic protest against the Providence that permitted eternally lost individuals of poor understanding to wander about in a night of doubtful ancestry. Growling to himself, he opened the door.

A gust of wind drove under the slant

roof of the porch, and caused the lamp flame to leap and smoke. Captain Binks, peering into the darkness, made out with difficulty a tall, slim figure, buttoned to the throat in a voluminous mackintosh, topped by a clerical felt hat.

"Is this," asked the stranger, "the abode of Captain Æneas Binks?"

"It's my house," replied the captain shortly. "I'm Binks; come in."

The stranger availed himself of the invitation and entered, closing the door carefully behind him. He removed his hat and shook the water from it, unbuttoned his raincoat, disclosing a costume of clerical cut, and eyed the fire with approval.

Invited to take a seat, he did so, and spread out his hands to the blaze. Then he scrutinized his host closely.

"Captain Binks," he began, "I've been looking for you for months."

"You have?" said the captain, in surprise. "I'm not that hard to find; I've been at home right along."

"Ah!" said the stranger, "if I'd known where your home was! That is what took the time."

"Well, now you've found me," said the captain, unbending, "you'd better have a drink, and then tell me what you are after me for."

The stranger shook his head.

"I never touch intoxicants. While I do not condemn you for using them, I have seen so much misery—yes, and bloodshed—result from overindulgence that nothing would tempt me to swallow even a teaspoonful. It may be true that some men may indulge for a time with impunity, but they are always in danger. And then there is the example! In my position how could I do that which might cause my brother to offend?"

"Is your brother a boozier?" asked Captain Binks sympathetically. "I had a cousin as was. An awful Injun when he got slewed. Found him sittin' by the fire one night toastin' the cat on a fish spear. Said he was the devil, and she was a soul he was tormentin' of. Didn't hurt her much beyond singe-in', and a hole or two in her fur. She cert'nly yowled."

The captain grinned cheerfully at the recollection. The stranger shook his head and sighed. Captain Binks' grin faded and he mixed himself a drink half apologetically.

He drank to the health of his guest—a courtesy which the latter did not even acknowledge; and filled his pipe—a process which was also regarded in sphinxlike silence.

Captain Binks grew restless beneath this continued taciturnity.

"You was speakin'," he hinted, "of looking for me for a long time?"

"Yes," replied the other.

"What for?" asked the captain bluntly.

"To pay my debt to you," said the stranger solemnly.

"Your debt? To me? Why, I never set eyes on you before, to my knowledge!" exclaimed the captain, in surprise.

"Time changes us all," said the stranger. "I'm Smith—Jacob Smith, and I met you in Hantsport, almost twenty years ago. Perhaps you remember me now."

"Can't say I do," replied Captain Binks. "I've been in Hantsport—used to call there in the old *Bella Balcom*, a matter of twenty years back—and I may have met you or your folks if they lived there, but I can't say positive."

"That would be the time," said Mr. Smith. "I was a mere youth then. Do you remember one night finding a young orphan lad on the docks in tears, because he had been robbed of all the little money he had in the world, and asking him what ailed him?"

"No," said the captain; "I don't."

"You heard his sad tale of misfortune," continued Mr. Smith, unheeding, "and you slapped him on the back in that hearty way of yours, and told him to be a man; and when you found out that his heart was set on being a missionary, and carrying the Word to the uttermost parts of the earth, and that there was a family in Westport who would board him for his help while he went to college and prepared himself for the great work, you gave him passage free in your vessel and set him on

shore there, with ten dollars of your money in his pocket. Do you remember that?"

"I'm darned if I do!" exclaimed Captain Binks. "Ten dollars of my money to a boy to be a missionary on! Huh! I ain't that sort of a man."

"It's like your generous, noble nature to forget a deed of kindness and charity," pursued Mr. Smith. "You must have done so many of them in your time that you can't pick out and place one, even when it is told to you. But though you forgot, the boy didn't. He took your money and bought books with it; and studied hard and became a missionary. He lived for years among the Indians of South America, but he never forgot his benefactor, and now he has come back to pay his debt a thousandfold. I am that boy, Captain Binks, and I tell you that the bread of kindness you cast on the waters then is now returned to you after many days."

"There's some mistake," said the captain; "I'm Æneas Binks, and I've been in Hantsport, but I don't know you, and as for giving a boy ten dollars—I never did. I'd have thought I was crazy. So'd any one else. You've got the wrong man, and that's all there is to it."

"Captain Æneas Binks," repeated the other reflectively. "It's not a common name. You've got the features and the figure. Search your memory. Can't you recall the instance I've mentioned?"

"No, I can't," said the captain emphatically. "I'm not a philanthropist, and never was; just a common, everyday sailorman that's always had a hard enough time to make ends meet without chucking away ten-dollar bills."

Mr. Smith sighed and sank deeper into his chair; his shoulders took on the slouch of disappointment and despondency.

"It must be so," he said, at length. "I've made a mistake. But where shall I find the Captain Binks I'm looking for? I've searched and searched for many months, and meantime opportunity is passing by. Perhaps that good, generous sailor is no more, and all my trouble is in vain. If I thought

that, I'd give up the search, but I cannot do so while there is a chance of being able to bestow wealth on my benefactor. That is why I have refrained from taking others into my confidence. Never shall it be said of Jacob Smith that in his own prosperity he forgot an old friend."

Mr. Smith's eyes sparkled with the light of high resolve. He banged his clenched hand on his knee.

Captain Binks listened, much impressed. The allusion to riches waiting outspread to be garnered by the hands of the missing Binks attracted him. He racked his memory for forgotten charities, and, failing to find any, decided upon a bold stroke.

"I had a brother," he said hesitatingly; "used to be in Hantsport now and again. Maybe it's him you're looking for."

"A brother!" exclaimed Mr. Smith. "Why didn't you say so before? What is his name? Is he full of good works? Does he look like you?"

"Never struck me it might be him," answered Captain Binks, taken aback by the torrent of questions. "He looks some like me—a little older, though. He was mighty charitable, was Bill."

"But the name?" said Mr. Smith. "You say it was William."

"That was how he was christened," said the captain, in some confusion, "but he was a great one to yarn. Not to deceive, you understand, but it was just his way. Folks used to call him Ananias Binks, for a pet name, like."

"It must be the same," said Mr. Smith. "And where is he? Where shall I find my benefactor?"

"Dead," said Captain Binks mournfully.

"Dead," echoed Mr. Smith.

"And buried," affirmed the captain, with a slow nod of the head.

Then the unexpected happened. Mr. Smith, affected by the news, gave one or two preliminary gasps and burst into tears, a succession of choking spasms.

Captain Binks, alarmed at the effects of his inventive powers, proceeded to slap his visitor on the back, and this

having no good result, he attempted to administer medicinally a stiff glass of rum and water, which Mr. Smith declined, with shudders, and every appearance of excessive dislike. However, his grief became less violent.

"Dead!" he sobbed. "My benefactor dead! Gone to his great reward before I could pay my debt! How brief the span of life! How frail our hold on things material! Take me to his grave, that I may sorrow upon it!"

"Can't be done," said Captain Binks. "Lost at sea, som'eres near the Grand Banks. Poor Bill!"

"But if he left a family," said Mr. Smith, "I may not be too late to show my gratitude to them. May it be mine to aid the widow and the fatherless!"

"He wasn't married," said the captain, rising to the occasion—"no chick nor child nor relatives except me, his only brother. We was great chums; I'd have given my life for Bill, and so he would for me."

Mr. Smith rose and held out his hand.

"Then to you I pay my debt to your brother," he said. "I thank the Providence that has enabled me, after a long and weary search, to find one of his blood to share in my good fortune. Take the hand of Jacob Smith, Captain Binks, and with it wealth and the power to do good beyond your wildest dreams."

They clasped hands warmly, the captain blessing the presence of mind that had enabled him to create and lose a brother at such an opportune time. Mr. Smith resumed his seat, and assumed the posture of a narrator.

"I have a long and strange tale to tell you, captain. When you have heard it, and seen what I have to show you, you will say so, too. You may be slow to believe me—I will not blame you for it. Then I will show you my proofs—proofs such as even a cautious, hard-headed man of the world like yourself cannot but admit are unassailable."

"I'm ready," said Captain Binks. "I wish poor Bill was here, but bein' as he ain't, I know he'd like to think his only brother was profiting by the good deeds he done in his lifetime."

With which touching fraternal sentiment he disposed himself to listen.

Mr. Smith nodded his appreciation of this evidence of brotherly love, and said it did credit to Captain Binks' heart, then plunged into his narrative:

"I will not weary you by relating my early struggles after I met that good man, your brother. Suffice it to say, that when I had been ordained I made up my mind that I would not seek for an easy charge, but would go beyond the outposts of civilization to preach the Word to those who were yet dwellers in darkness. So I resolved, and a mission offered itself in South America. Do you know South America at all, captain?"

"Mostly by hearsay," replied the latter. "I've been in Rio, and touched at points along the coast, but that's all."

Mr. Smith seemed disappointed.

"I am sorry for that, for if you were acquainted with the country you would be more willing to believe in its marvelous richness. It is the garden and the treasure-house of the world, but its vast capabilities are little known. The natives are too indolent and ignorant to make use of them, and the country is so vast that strangers may stumble around in it for years and find nothing.

"However, to that country I went, and finally reached the territory of the Bacauhiri Indians, which is nearly five hundred miles in the interior of Brazil. It is reached by following the Amazon River to where the Xingu flows into it, and proceeding up the latter for about four hundred miles. It is easily navigable for boats or small launches.

"The Bacauhiri country lies just west of a lofty range of mountains, which are not marked on the map, nor are they known to explorers. I believe them to be a spur of the Cordilleras. Their secrets are their own, and I think I was the first white man to set foot there. Streams, fed by the eternal snow that caps their summits, dash down and mingle with the darker waters of the Xingu. There one may find all the different climates of California, simply by going to a higher or lower altitude.

"The Bacauhiri tribe I found very suspicious of strangers and inclined to be hostile, but when they became convinced of my peaceable intentions, I was allowed to land and build a hut among them and to preach the gospel unmolested.

"They are a fine people physically, and there is a local tradition that they came far from the north to escape persecution by a strange race. It is this, combined with many strange inscriptions of almost Egyptian character, the meaning of which they have forgotten, that has led me to think that they may be the descendants of tribes who fled from the cruelties of the Spaniards under Pizarro or Cortez. Another thing, of which I will tell you later, has confirmed me in that belief.

"With them I abode for five years, speaking their language and living their life, and hearing no word of English except that spoken by my faithful follower, Manuel, who could talk it in his broken way.

"I have a little knowledge of medicine and surgery, and the cures I effected seemed marvelous to that simple-minded people. I became famous throughout the country as a medicine-man, and there was little that I might not have had for the asking.

"They offered me everything, from wooden and bone carvings to wives, and were much pained by my steadfast refusal to accept the latter."

"Were there any good-lookers among the women?" asked Captain Binks. "I've heard tell that some of them Injun women was built on good lines, like bronze Venuses. And what's more, they know their place, and ain't apt to be high-steppers."

"Some of them were handsome, and I have no doubt they made good wives," replied Mr. Smith, "but of course I was not attracted by them. And now I come to the interesting part of my story.

"I am something of a geologist, and, as I wandered forth among the hills, it was my habit to examine bits of rock to try and trace the history of the country. One day, rising from drinking at

a stream, I saw growing on the side of the cliff above my head a singularly beautiful flower. I climbed up to pluck it, and as I did so the clump of earth on which it grew came away, and exposed the rock beneath. I saw a gleam of yellow, and, striking at it with my geologist's hammer, I detached a mass of mineral about the size of my two fists. Guess what it was?"

"Gold!" breathed Captain Binks, in an awe-stricken whisper.

"Gold," said Mr. Smith solemnly. "Yellow gold, raw from the virgin breast of the hills. For a moment I was dumb with amazement, and doubted the evidence of my senses. Then, as I realized the great discovery that it had been given to me to make, I fell upon my knees and thanked the Creator who had put into my hand this mighty instrument for good. For there is uncounted wealth in that hill, captain—millions on millions of tons. Think of what may be done with it! Of the churches that may be built, the hospitals endowed, the libraries established——"

"You could have a sea-goin' yacht and champagne to wash in!" exclaimed Captain Binks, carried away by the vast possibilities of the situation.

"Free schools, distress relieved, missionaries trained——"

"A private car with niggers, and hacks to the hotels——"

"The fallen rescued, the brands snatched from the burning——"

"Fifty-cent segars and front seats at the best shows, where you see the swift dances——"

"And the Word carried to the ends of the earth!" finished Mr. Smith. "And you shall share alike with me, Captain Binks, for the sake of that good man, your brother!"

"Here's to her!" roared Captain Binks, slushing liquor with a prodigal hand into two glasses, and passing one to Mr. Smith. "Monte Cristo was a monkey! Drink her down!"

He threw the liquor down his throat lavishly. Mr. Smith smiled in protest, and set his glass upon the table untasted.

"You must remember, Captain Binks, that I do not use liquor, even medicinally.

"Now to continue my story. I carried my precious lump of metal home, and immediately began questioning the natives on the subject. From the head man or chief I learned that they knew of the existence of this mineral in great quantities, though they had never, through ignorance, put it to use.

"Also he said he had in his possession articles of the same material, handed down in his family for generations. He showed them to me. They were small plates and crude ornaments of various shapes, but all undoubtedly of beaten gold. The chief said he had no knowledge of their makers, beyond a tradition that they were fashioned by the 'cunning workers' of long ago.

"I tried to induce him to let me have even one of them, but in vain. He was not aware of their value, but said it would bring bad luck upon his house if they left his possession."

"Ignorant heathen!" grunted Captain Binks indignantly.

"I thought long over my find before I decided that it was my duty to give it to the world. When I did so decide, I called a council of the head men of the tribe, and entered into a solemn and ceremonious agreement with them, whereby they gave me the right to a territory five miles square to do with as I pleased, and that territory includes the gold mountain.

"The agreement was sealed with the most impressive ceremonies, and is as binding on them as any that could be made in a civilized country. I then left the Bacauhiri territory, and when I reached the coast sought out the local authorities, and from them procured a charter or license to seek for and mine all precious metals within certain specified limits, upon payment of a trifling royalty. Here is the document giving me that power."

Mr. Smith drew from his pocket a tin case, and, opening it, unfolded a formidable-looking sheet of parchment bedecked with red seals, and scrawled over with undecipherable signatures.

Captain Binks pored over the instrument, but as it was not in English, it conveyed little meaning. Mr. Smith translated. It appeared that he might do almost anything short of murder in a territory whereof the bounds were delimited by certain mountains and rivers, known and unknown.

It resembled the ultimate result of a well-managed lobby in a house of new representatives; it provided for the killing of snakes and noxious weeds, and for the building of cities and railroads, and it gave military powers to Jacob Smith over his workmen and all Indians.

It was conceived by a master-mind that did nothing by halves—the prodigality of resources of an undeveloped country showed in every line. New countries err in this way; after they have given away almost all their natural assets they learn caution.

The well-turned sentences rolled from Mr. Smith's tongue in mellow accents; he waved the charter as a magic wand before the admiring eyes of Captain Binks, who in fancy saw himself sitting beneath a mighty tree, checking off burdens of gold which a ceaseless procession of Indian workers laid at his feet.

So pleased was the captain at the prospect that he brought forth a box of seasoned Manila cigars, usually reserved to grace holidays and state occasions, and, lighting one, wove dream-pictures in the fragrant blue smoke.

Mr. Smith became businesslike.

"Now, captain," he said, "I have shown you my entire discovery, and I think you will agree with me that vast wealth awaits us. But in order to get to the place and extract the gold, a certain amount of expenditure is necessary. I may as well tell you frankly that I have very little money. Missionaries, as a rule, are none too well paid, and a few hundred dollars is all I have in the world.

"You see, it cost money to get that charter. The local officials would do nothing without money, and, while I did not bribe them, I had to pay for what I got. It was either that or nothing.

The difficulty is, then, to secure funds to outfit an expedition. My plan was to form a joint stock company, but that takes time, and we would have to give away a great many shares to outsiders to interest them, which would make our own profits less. Do you see the point?"

"You bet I do," replied Captain Binks; "we want to keep it all for ourselves, by thunder!"

"Exactly so; but how? I have no money. Have you?"

"I got a little," said the captain, hesitating. "How much would we want?"

"At least a thousand for preliminary expenses. We will have to buy tools, light machinery, and boats for transporting it up the rivers. I thought of a gasoline launch; it would be fast, and could be used to advantage. I hardly think one thousand would be sufficient, but it would buy most of the outfit, and I think I can make up the balance out of my own purse. There would be also our passage-money, and one or two trustworthy men to engage. It struck me that you might see to that, while I could look after the supplies, knowing as I do just what is needed in that country. Now, the question is—can you spare one thousand dollars, cash, for the venture?"

Captain Binks meditated. A sudden chill came over his spirits; the caution of his people was in the ascendant.

"I can raise the thousand," he said, at length; "but—you see I don't know you. I mean no offense, but business is business."

"Quite so." Mr. Smith smiled, as a man who encounters a difficulty foreseen and provided for. "What you say proves that you are the keen business man I would like to have associated with me, who have small knowledge of worldly affairs. Like you, when I knocked at your door, I did not know you, and therefore I took my precautions. I spoke of my faithful half-breed, Manuel; he came with me, and is now outside. If you will let me call him, I think I can answer your objection. Shall we ask him in?"

"Of course," said Captain Binks.

"Why didn't he come before? It's no sort of a night for a man to wait outside."

Mr. Smith went to the door and emitted a peculiar cry. It was answered from the darkness. Quick steps resounded on the porch, and Manuel entered, water dripping from his high-crowned Mexican hat and running off his garments in little streams.

Manuel was slight and swarthy; his black eyes glittered warily; he was wrapped in the garment known as a poncho, and his trousers were lavish as to the bottoms and tight as to the thighs. Little fringes depended from the outer seams. Manuel looked the typical vaquero in the old geography prints. He swept the floor with his hat in an elaborate bow to the captain. Then he stood silently, his arms folded across his chest beneath the poncho.

"Manuel," said Mr. Smith, "this is our good friend, Captain Binks—the good man who helped me years ago, for whom we have been looking so long."

Manuel bowed again, easily, gracefully. His recovery was catlike and lithe.

"Dam glad see you. You good man. He"—indicating Mr. Smith—"dam good man. *Habla español?*"

"*Mucho bono.* You're all right," said Captain Binks.

"Manuel," said Mr. Smith, "you must not use profane language. Poor fellow," he went on, addressing the captain, "he does not realize what he is saying. At heart he is very religious."

"He may be," said Captain Binks, eying the religious Manuel doubtfully. "You good Christian man?"

"Much pray," responded Manuel, beaming. "Like hear? 'Now I lay me down——'"

"Tut, tut!" said Mr. Smith. "Keep your prayers for a fitting time. Captain Binks is going to Brazil with us, Manuel, and will help us dig the gold from the hills. He is a great sailor and a brave man, and rich. He is going to furnish money for our expedition, but first he needs to be shown that

we mean business. Show him what you carry with you."

At the word, Manuel's right hand came forth from his draperies; it held a formidable knife. His face, to the astonished eyes of Captain Binks, took on a sinister expression. His left thumb caressed the edge of the blade.

"Manuel," cried Mr. Smith sharply, "I am ashamed of you! Not that—the other. He will carry weapons," he explained to the alarmed captain. "He says it is folly to be without them in a strange country. I assure you he is quite harmless unless attacked, when he will fight like a lion."

Captain Binks, but partially reassured, saw with relief Manuel secrete the knife and produce a small package wrapped in dirty buckskin, which at a word from Mr. Smith he handed to him. It was astonishingly heavy.

"Open it," said Mr. Smith.

Captain Binks undid the thongs with difficulty, his face expressing a sailor's contempt for knots that could not be instantly cast free. He unfolded the skin covering, and beheld a rough, yellow mass, evidently virgin gold.

Fascinated, he regarded it. There was indubitable proof of Mr. Smith's story—of the existence of the strange tribe, the mighty rivers, the snow-capped hills. There, on his knee, lay the promise and the proof of wealth but dimly imagined, the wonderful metal that has from time immemorial sent men forth on the quest, peopled the waste places, and robbed the home churchyards of their rightful bones—beautiful, mysterious, alluring, all-compelling gold.

"Well," said Mr. Smith, "what do you think of it?"

Captain Binks breathed heavily. Just then he was without the power of expression. It seemed to him that the earth and the fulness thereof were his, and mere words were superfluous.

"In that lump," Mr. Smith continued, "are one hundred and seven ounces. It is not refined, but just as it came from the earth, and it is worth, roughly speaking, twelve hundred dollars. It is the original nugget I dis-

covered, and because it is the first I do not wish to part with it. But to prove that you run no risk in putting money into this venture, I will hand it to you for keeping, you advancing one thousand dollars, and agreeing to return the gold to me when you shall have made two thousand dollars' profit from the mine. Is that fair?"

"No, no!" cried Manuel, in shrill protest. "Keep gold, good gold!"

He poured out a stream of liquid Spanish, his eyes regarding the treasure covetously. Mr. Smith explained to him in the same language, and he relapsed into discontented mutterings.

"Now," said the latter to Captain Binks, "what do you think of my proposition?"

"It's fair and aboveboard," replied the captain. "You can't do any more, and so far as I can see I don't stand to lose a red cent. You mustn't mind me being careful of my money, because if I wasn't I wouldn't have it long. I'm sure this here is gold, but I'm going to ask you to let me show it to some one who can tell me for certain. I don't know who will be able to, hereabouts. Maybe they can tell at the bank."

"That is a wise precaution," said Mr. Smith. "It proves once more that you are the business man I need. Now, as there is no time to be lost, I suggest that we draw up a memorandum of our bargain and a list of the supplies we shall require, and talk over our plans. Manuel and I will then go back to the hotel for the night, and in the morning you can make inquiries of your bankers."

The proposition suited Captain Binks. He produced writing materials, the agreement was drawn up and signed, and they were soon deep in prices of mining machinery, arms, stores, and medicines, with all of which Mr. Smith displayed a happy familiarity.

Manuel meanwhile wandered restlessly about the room, lifted the blind, and peered out into the darkness. Then he drew it down again, and, seating himself by the fire, rolled cigarettes endlessly.

Suddenly a shout interrupted the dis-

cussion of Mr. Smith and Captain Binks. There was silence for a moment, then a trampling on the steps and a knock on the door.

"Everybody seems to be on the road to-night," said Captain Binks, shuffling across the floor and turning the knob.

"I beg your pardon," said the newcomer, supporting himself with one hand against the casing, "but my horse has run away and upset me half a mile down the road. I am afraid there is something the matter with my ankle—feels like something broken. Seeing your light I ventured to knock. Perhaps you can tell me how far it is to town?"

"Matter of a mile or more," replied the captain. "Come in and sit down and rest. Maybe we can fix your ankle, and if not, you can bunk with me till morning."

The stranger was a tall, pleasant-featured man, bearded, much browned and quiet-mannered. He carried a very old and muddy black bag, and his clothes were plastered with mire from the road. Evidently he had had a bad spill. Captain Binks installed him in an easy chair by the fire and prescribed rum. The stranger accepted the offer, and moved his leg stiffly.

"I know a little anatomy," said Mr. Smith, "and perhaps I can be of use. I have set several broken limbs among the Indians."

The stranger was willing to put himself in Mr. Smith's hands. The latter unlaced the boot, removed the stocking, and deftly manipulated the ankle. He gave a straight pull, a side motion, and an upward shove. There was a dull click and a suppressed oath of pain from the stranger. Mr. Smith rose to his feet.

"You are all right now, I think. It was merely a displaced bone, and it went back very easily. Unless there is irritation, caused by walking since the injury, you will find no inconvenience in a few hours time."

The stranger thanked Mr. Smith warmly, and said he felt easier already.

"It seems," said he, "that I have

fallen into a nest of good Samaritans, though I can't say that I had previously fallen among thieves. Perhaps you will let me know to whom I am indebted for this kindness and medical assistance? Permit me to offer my card."

He produced one from a case and handed it to Captain Binks, who read:

MR. GEORGE KEITH GRANT, C. E.

United States Assay Office

WASHINGTON, D. C.

The captain handed it to Mr. Smith, and glanced at him meaningly.

"I'm Æneas Binks, Master, retired," he said. "This is the Reverend Jacob Smith, of Brazil, South America, my partner, and that is his man, Manuel. If he has any other name I don't know it. This is my place, and I'm glad you happened in on us—not glad your horse ran away, you know, but if I read your card right, you are just the man we wanted to see. You're an assayer, ain't you?"

"That's how I make my living," said Mr. Grant, surprised.

"Well, now, that bein' so," pursued Captain Binks, "I s'pose you can tell by lookin' at it, just what any metal is?"

"It would depend on the metal," said Mr. Grant, with a smile. "What metal have you in mind?"

"Gold," said Captain Binks proudly.

"Gold," repeated Mr. Grant. "Yes, I think I can tell gold when I see it. If not, the acid test is simple and positive."

"Then," said Captain Binks, taking the buckskin-covered parcel from the table and handing it to him, "look at that and tell me what it is."

Mr. Grant unwrapped the nugget, and his eyes widened in surprise.

"I should say that it is gold, and gold of a very fine quality, resembling the output of the Peruvian mines," said he; "but I would not be positive without an actual test. I have the materials

for one in my bag here—never travel without them. Shall I make it?"

"Go ahead," said Captain Binks.

"By all means," said Mr. Smith.

The acid test proved somewhat complicated. The assayer rummaged in his bag and brought out a leather case filled with small bottles. Of these he selected three, and set them on the table.

Taking up the nugget he poured a portion of the contents of each bottle over it, collecting the fluid, as it ran off, in a small glass bowl. The result he stirred carefully with a glass tube, and added a little white powder, stirring until it dissolved.

Producing a small ladle with a long handle, he dipped it full from the bowl and held it over the fire until it steamed. The contents of the ladle he strained through a square of blue paper. He inspected the paper narrowly through a magnifying-glass.

Then he added another pinch of powder to the strained liquid. It turned to foam and floated on the surface. Mr. Grant smiled at the watchers.

"Well, gentlemen, the test is over, and I can assure you this metal is gold."

"Perhaps," said Mr. Smith, "you would not object to giving a certificate signed by yourself in your professional capacity, testifying to the nature of the metal and estimating its value."

"With great pleasure—only—well, you know I am in the employ of the government, and my time and skill are not my own. For each test that we make, when accompanied by an official certificate, we are supposed to charge a minimum fee of five dollars."

Mr. Smith looked at Captain Binks.

"I'll pay for it," said the latter. "It's cheap at the price, to get the guarantee of the United States. Let's have the certificate."

Mr. Grant weighed the nugget on a set of spidery scales brought from the recesses of his bag. He wrote the certificate on a form in a long, narrow book, entered the particulars on the stub, detached the certificate, and handed it to the captain.

It set forth, in technical language,

the date, particulars, and result of the test, valued the nugget at from twelve to fifteen hundred dollars, and acknowledged the receipt of the fee named by Mr. Grant. This Captain Binks handed over, and Mr. Grant pocketed it with a further protest.

It was arranged that he should stay the night with Captain Binks, it being injudicious for him to attempt to use his injured ankle. Mr. Smith and Manuel departed for their hotel, where the captain was to meet them the next day, in banking hours, and bring one thousand dollars, receiving in exchange the nugget.

After the night's rest, Mr. Grant found himself able to walk without much inconvenience, and accompanied Captain Binks into town, where they parted.

Captain Binks visited the bank and drew one thousand dollars in crisp twenty-dollar bills, with which he repaired to the hotel.

Mr. Smith was waiting, occupying the time in studying a large map of Brazil. He pointed out on it the exact position of his discovery, and seemed in a fever of impatience to engage in preparation. To him the captain gave the money, and received from the still reluctant Manuel the specified security, in its deerskin wrappings.

"Now," said Mr. Smith, when the transfer had been concluded, "the sooner we can complete our preparations the better. We have just time to catch the train for the city, and I propose that Manuel and I take it and address ourselves at once to the task. By the end of the week I will either write you and report progress, or visit you in person. If you should wish to communicate in the meantime, a letter addressed care of the Pan-American Bible Society will always reach me. Get our valises, Manuel. Good-by, captain."

He wrung the hand of Captain Binks warmly, and ran from the room. The captain, following, was just in time to see him disappear in the hotel bus, and to receive a farewell wave of the hat. Then he faced toward the bank, the

gold in its buckskin cover firmly clasped in his good right hand.

In a back room of a small but exclusive hotel, situated in a most unaristocratic suburb, three men sat. The door was tightly closed. Bottles and a box of cigars adorned the table, and in the center lay a heap of crisp twenty-dollar bills.

"Easy money, what there is of it," said one, who bore a striking resemblance to a certain Jacob Smith; "I wish it was more, but he wouldn't have stood a touch for over a thousand. I'd like to have a photo of his face when you were pouring the pineapple sirup and soda over the goods, John. His eyes were simply popping out of his head. Wonderful, the interest in science exhibited by the laity. For all he seemed so easy after you dropped in, it looked to me at one time as if I'd have to give it up and fly the coop with Dago Frank, here; eh, Frank?"

"He not lik-a de knife, but he cough-a de mon' all right," said the man addressed.

"Well, let's divvy," said the third, a brown-bearded, pleasant-spoken man. "There's three return-tickets—that'll be eighteen ninety I put up for, and I throw in electroplating the lead. Hotel expenses each pays for himself. A suit of clothes I ruined rolling in the mud to make up for my entry'll be thirty more. You fellows' preacher and Spanish rigs will do for the next graft, and we won't count them—they're paid for."

He calculated rapidly with a stub of pencil on the back of an envelope.

"That'll be nine fifty—one ten to split, as I figure it. Pay for the drinks and things we've had here—say three fifteen apiece. Not bad for two days' work."

"Hold on," said the shade of Jacob Smith. "You got five from old Hard-a-port for that phony assay certificate. We split that, too."

"You go to blazes," said the expert. "It cost me that to get the forms printed."

A Mesmeric Mystery

By J. Egerton

Author of "*A Prisoner of the Mind*," Etc.

Mr. Egerton's previous story, "*A Prisoner of the Mind*," which appeared in the February issue, proved so popular with our readers that we prevailed upon him to write us another tale about his hypnotic detective. In "*A Mesmeric Mystery*" the irrepressible "Tommy Williams" makes use of his peculiar powers in a search for buried treasure.

(A Complete Novel)



OW, Tommy, out with it," I said, as he pushed his cigarette-case across to me while I poured the black coffee. "I know that you have something on your mind, and I am due back at the office before ten."

Tommy's face bore a marked resemblance to the commonly accepted make-up for *Mephisto*, in the glow of the match with which he was lighting his cigarette, and he nodded assent as he blew a cloud of smoke into the air.

"You have made a good guess; my mind has been loaded to the muzzle for the past fortnight, and now that I am ready to act, I need your assistance," he answered, looking around to see that we were out of earshot of the other guests. We had dined on the terrace of a small hotel near the Washington Arch, a relic of the days when the old square was the center of New York's fashionable world, which has been forgotten by all save a few who know that its cellars still contain many bottles of rare vintages, and that the traditions of the cuisine which made it famous have been religiously preserved.

"Are you going to give me another sensation to write up?" I asked, when

he had satisfied himself that we could not be overheard.

"Not by a jugful!" he exclaimed emphatically. "This is an entirely new line, and I trust that when our adventure is concluded you will be placed beyond the necessity of prostituting your brain by writing slush for the *Howler*."

"Complimentary to my literary productions, aren't you?" I answered good-naturedly, amused by Tommy's confirmed habit of hitting yellow journalism. "I don't know that they are any more to be deplored than your decorations for the Kemble Theater."

Tommy, in turn, took complacently the hit at some particularly garish ornamentation of the new playhouse, and shrugged his shoulders indifferently.

"I am not posing as an art educator," he replied. "I told them what I wanted to do, which would have been thoroughly artistic; they told me what they wanted, which I admit is horrible; but it was their theater, and they were to pay the bills, so I didn't get on my high horse and tell them to go to a sign-painter, but gave 'em what they wanted, and received their check, which made a very comfortable addition to my bank-account."

"Don't quarrel with me about my

method of earning my bread and butter, then," I answered, laughing at the practical view which Tommy took of a profession whose members are apt to be intolerant of the wishes and criticisms of their customers; but Tommy looked serious.

"If we can pull off the scheme which I have in my mind, you can spend your leisure in writing sonnets, and I can paint what pleases me, aside from all considerations of filthy lucre," he said in a low voice.

"Then I'm your man!" I answered eagerly, for past events had justified my confidence in Tommy's ability. "What is it to be—another practical application of hypnotism?"

"Of course; but you'll have to trust yourself absolutely to me. Are you willing to do that, and will the *Howler* let you off?"

I assured Tommy that I was willing to take a chance with him. "I haven't anything particular on hand for the paper now. I finish up the story of the Black-Hand kidnaping case to-night, and there is nothing else in my particular line of work in sight."

"Ask for an indefinite leave of absence, then, and try to forget that you are a newspaper man. I have been working on my scheme for a long time, and I've spent the past two months down South, ferreting out information and clues to go on. I almost wish that we could carry this thing on alone, and that I could use you for the passive subject," he said, looking at me curiously.

I felt uncomfortable under his steady gaze, and half rose from my chair.

"Tommy, if you try any of that on me I'll punch your head," I said; but he grinned reassuringly as he disclaimed any such intention.

"No fear, old chap. I couldn't if I wanted to; and, on the whole, I think it is better the other way. I've got my man, anyway; and, considering his heredity, he isn't a bad sort."

I sat down again and gave a sigh of relief, for after what I had seen Tommy do with others whom he had put into

the hypnotic trance, I had no wish to be the subject.

"Who is it?" I asked; but Tommy, who is fond of mysteries and does everything according to a prearranged plan, refused to enlighten me.

"Drop into the studio on the way uptown to-night, and we'll get right down to business," he said. "We shall have to go into a lot of details, and incidentally I'll introduce you to the man who will work with us, or, to be accurate, for us."

I had little difficulty in arranging for an indefinite leave of absence with the managing editor, who scented a possible sensation as a result of my vacation; and after cleaning out my desk and handing the last of my stuff to the night city editor, I started, a free man, for Tommy's studio.

I found him seated before a large table on which were several books whose bindings indicated age, a mass of yellow documents, and a set of charts of the Atlantic coast and the neighboring islands. He motioned to me to help myself at the buffet while he carefully sorted the papers; and, although I saw that there was no one else in the studio, I felt that Tommy could be depended upon, and that the third man would appear in due time.

"I'll start right in at the beginning of the whole business, and we'll do things decently and in order," remarked Tommy, as he selected one of the books from the pile on the table. "To begin with, let me call your attention to this passage in one of Marryat's novels, which was the first thing to attract my notice to this very matter."

He read it aloud: an account of the finding of a deposit of quicksilver during some excavations which were made in building the fortifications of the harbor of Nassau, in the Bahamas. I looked at him in astonishment when he had finished, for I could see no possible bearing which a passage in a novel written so long ago could have upon our present fortunes, but he gave me no opportunity to question him.

"Remember that you have promised to take this all on faith," he warned

me, forestalling any expression of incredulity on my part. "I promise to convince you that I am not crazy before I have finished, but you will have to take for granted facts which are almost beyond belief. As to that passage in the novel, I suppose thousands of people have read it and never given it a second thought. It immediately appeared to my imagination, because I happen to know a good deal about Nassau and its history."

"All right, Tommy; fire ahead," I answered. "I am a man of leisure, now, and you can take your own time in explaining things."

"You *Howler* reporters want a sensation every minute!" he grumbled. "You'll get all the thrills that are due you before I have finished, but you must understand the lay of the land first. Now, the city of Nassau is situated on a coral rock which is called the Island of New Providence. There is not enough soil on it to make agriculture profitable, and the whole formation makes it impossible that quicksilver ever originated there—it must have been brought from the mainland. In looking up the origin of quicksilver, I found that there were mines of the metal in Peru, which until the last century formed part of the possessions of Spain. At the time when Spain was draining the new world of everything of value which could be transported, Nassau was the headquarters of the worst band of pirates and buccaneers which ever harried the ocean; and it seems perfectly logical to conclude that this quicksilver formed part of the cargo of a captured galleon which was looted by the pirates."

"That seems a safe deduction," I commented, disappointed that his investigations had led to nothing more sensational. "But, as I understand it, this quicksilver was discovered more than a hundred years ago, and, being notoriously unstable, it has probably entirely disappeared."

"You are slow in taking up the scent," replied Tommy. "I'll try and make the whole thing clear to you, if you will be patient. You know that

quicksilver is a difficult thing to handle and transport, owing to its corrosive action on the other metals. I found that the Spaniards had overcome this difficulty by packing it in rawhide bags, which, on account of the weight and fluid nature of the contents, had to be most carefully tied and sealed. The buccaneers were an ignorant lot, who rarely knew the value of the things they captured, and tradition has it that their captains acquired most of the articles of great intrinsic value, and that they buried such loot as they wished to retain. Is it not possible that this quicksilver was part of the treasure which was intrusted to the earth for safe-keeping; the weight of the bags and the fact that it was carried with the other treasures of the ship's cargo, making it appear of great value to them?"

"That is quite probable, I should say, from what little I know of the habits of the gentry," I answered, still skeptical about there being anything valuable in Tommy's discovery; and he went on a little impatiently when I reminded him that there had been no mention made of anything else being found.

"Of course there was not, or I should not be bothering my head about it. It is just those things which I hope to find; and this is the theory that I worked out, which you will have to admit is at least a plausible one: The coral rock is covered only by a thin layer of soil, when it is covered at all; but where it has not been exposed to the air it is so soft that it can be cut with a saw. It hardens quickly upon exposure to the weather, and most of the buildings in Nassau are constructed from it. The quarrying for Fort Finnicastle, which was under construction at the time the discovery of the quicksilver was made, was done at the foot of the hill on which the fort is built; but my idea is that the mercury was never buried where it was found. I believe that either alone, or with other treasure, it was buried at the top or on the side of the hill, and the rotting of the rawhide bags permitted it to escape and percolate through the thin topsoil to the place where it was un-

earthed. Now, I have carefully searched the records, and I can find no trace of anything else having been found, so the chances are that whatever was put in hiding by the pirates is still there."

"Provided that there was anything else," I replied; but in spite of the doubt which my words implied I was becoming interested, for I realized that Tommy had carefully studied the whole thing out.

"That, of course," he replied seriously; "but I have good reason to believe that the old traditions of the burying of treasure by the buccaneers are founded upon fact, and that the greater part of their hidden plunder is still where they secreted it. You must remember that their deaths were usually sudden, and they had no time to leave directions for their executors. For example, take Teach, the most famous of them all. When he was killed and his ship captured, only twelve thousand dollars' worth of stuff was found on board, although he was known to have captured millions. Members of his crew who were made prisoners told their captors that the night before his death he took part in a drunken carouse, during which he boasted of the amount of plunder which had fallen to his share, but remarked that only the devil and himself knew where he had hidden it, and he carried the secret with him when he fell."

"And it is that secret which you propose to discover?" I said incredulously. "I suppose that a thousand others have searched for that mythical hoard."

"Possibly, but without such data to go on and such unusual assistance as I shall have in my search," answered Tommy complacently. "Provided that there was a treasure hidden by Teach, and that it has not since been disturbed, I am as sure that I shall discover it as I am that we are sitting here."

His tone carried such conviction that in my imagination I could almost see him counting over a store of "pieces of eight," and when he leaned over and drew a box from under the table, it would not have surprised me if he had produced a bag of diamonds.

"Are your nerves in good condition?" he asked, as he placed the box in front of him on the table.

I nodded, as I watched him remove a round, cloth-covered object from the box; but when he unfastened the last of the covers and exposed the thing which the box had held I gave an involuntary start of horror. I was accustomed to seeing uncanny things in Tommy's studio, and my work had taken me where I witnessed ghastly sights which the average man is mercifully spared; but the object before me was more gruesome than anything I had seen in many a day.

It was a mummied head, but with such a hideous and repulsive countenance that I could not believe it had ever belonged to a human being. Little of the parchment-like skin of the face was visible, for a thick mass of hair fell over the low, receding forehead, and a beard as coarse as a horse's mane grew almost to the empty eye-sockets. The nose was flattened and twisted, and the shrunken lips, distorted in a hideous grin, displayed teeth which were discolored and broken and as large as those of an animal. The beard was braided in many small plaits, each tied with a bit of rotten and discolored silk ribbon, while a stout piece of rope, which had apparently been used to carry the head by, was securely fastened in the coarse hair. It was repulsive, but I knew that Tommy would not have it there without good reason, and I drew closer to examine it and see if it were really a human head or that of some species of ape. Tommy looked at it affectionately, and then glanced from it to the mummy of an Egyptian princess which stood in the corner of the studio.

"This is a mere baby as compared to her highness, there," he said; "but such as it is, it should have been buried in 1717, if the secrets of the wicked, old brain were to be preserved from the prying methods of modern investigation. Allow me to present to you the mortal remains of Edward Teach, the most notorious pirate of his time, commonly called Blackbeard!"

Knowing Tommy's fondness for dramatic situations and startling demonstrations, I had been prepared for a sensational announcement, but in this he had outdone himself, and, after a gasp of astonishment at the absurdity of it, I burst out with incredulous laughter. Tommy was in no way disconcerted by my merriment, and I appreciated the fact that he believed he was telling the truth. Then, for the first time in our acquaintance, I doubted his absolute sanity.

"Great Scott! Tommy, what are you trying to make me believe?" I exclaimed. "The man's been dead these two hundred years!"

"Pretty nearly," answered Tommy, in a matter-of-fact voice. "Since 1717, to be exact; but none the less, this is his head. There was a considerable price upon it, and Lieutenant Maynard, who killed him, cut it off and brought it into port suspended from the point of his ship's bowsprit. He didn't save it for its beauty, as you can imagine, but it was worth thirty-five hundred cold dollars to him, and I trust that it will be worth many times that sum to us before I am through with it."

I looked earnestly at him and then at the horrible face of the mummy, wondering if by any possibility he could be right and that this might be the head of the man who, with Captain Kidd, had divided my admiration at the period of my boyhood when I had decided that the career of a pirate was the only one worth following.

"Will you kindly tell me where you got this horrible thing, and what reason you have to believe that it was ever worn on Blackbeard's shoulders?" I asked finally.

"The identification is easy," replied Tommy confidently. "Every detail of the head corresponds with the minute descriptions of Teach which are given in the many old documents which I have examined, but to make you believe it, I shall have to give you a part of his history, which I have pieced together from many sources, eliminating all of the purely romantic stories which have been told about him."

He settled back in his chair and lighted a cigarette, looking thoughtfully at the face in front of him.

"That head doesn't indicate that its owner was a benevolent man, and from all I can learn Teach was the cruelest and most bloodthirsty brute who ever followed the gentle profession of piracy. He lived in a day when buccaneering was a comparatively respectable avocation, and followed by an organized band of men who made their headquarters at Nassau. They even had a form of government there, a sort of buccaneer republic; but he and another one of the leaders named Benjamin Hornigold soon threw off all pretense of preying only on the Spaniards, and looted every ship which fell into their hands. They were so numerous and powerful that, not content with sweeping the Spanish Main clear of all honest commerce, they had the audacity to organize an expedition to harry the American colonies, and they made a great success of the venture.

"After six months of it, Hornigold and Teach separated, the former returning to look after the headquarters at Nassau, while Teach, with his flagship, the *Queen Anne's Revenge*, and two other vessels, blockaded the port of Charleston and captured several incoming ships which had prominent citizens of the colony on board. Under threat of murdering all of the prisoners, Teach made requisition on the colony for supplies for his ships, and for ransom; and it was honored by the governor, who took the occasion to inform Teach that the king had offered free pardon to all buccaneers who would take the oath of allegiance and renounce piracy.

"Having wrung the last possible penny out of the colony, and seeing no further profit in sight, Teach sailed his squadron into the harbor and accepted the amnesty; but you can imagine what the presence of that fleet and its sailors, the vilest lot of men ever gathered together, meant in the small colony.

"Teach found Governor Eden a man after his own heart, corrupt and covetous; and, knowing the tremendous

profits to be made by piracy, he gave the buccaneers free sway and entered into a compact with their leader. The pirates terrorized the inhabitants of the town, heaped all sorts of indignities upon them, and Teach even went to the length of demanding the hand of a beautiful girl, only sixteen years of age, in marriage. The fact that he already had a dozen wives in different parts of the West Indies didn't trouble him any, and the wedding was made the occasion for a prolonged orgy by all hands.

"Teach soon tired of domesticity and the simple life, and sailed out of the port bearing letters of marque as a respectable privateer to prey upon the commerce of the king's enemies; but he couldn't forget his old habits, and captured every ship which he came across, regardless of its nationality, and, as their own governor would not help them, being a silent partner of Blackbeard, as was proven by papers found on the pirate ship, the harassed colonists applied to the governor of Virginia, who sent Lieutenant Maynard and a small sloop to their assistance.

"The Carolinians furnished another sloop, and in spite of a warning, treacherously sent to Blackbeard by Governor Eden, they followed Blackbeard's ships into one of the inlets, where he had taken them for water and supplies, and wiped out the lot of them. Teach, scorning to accept quarter, was killed in a hand-to-hand fight, and his head, which you see before you, was taken to obtain the reward, while the members of his crew who were not killed in the fight were hanged in a row between high and low water, in Charleston harbor. Governor Eden found it convenient to die within a few days, and the reign of the buccaneers was over in South Carolina."

"And the head of the arch-pirate, having been paid for in good money, was carefully filed away as a voucher in the office of the colonial treasurer, I suppose, to be found two hundred years later by Mr. Thomas Williams?" I said banteringly, but he was not in the slightest degree disturbed.

"No, the locating of this interesting

relic was not quite as simple a matter as that," he said. "I had it in mind when I set out to find something which had been intimately associated with the career of the pirate captain, for the circumstance of its having been carried into port in such a theatrical manner made it stand out prominently in the history of the time, but I scarcely counted on such good fortune. A pair of pistols, a cutlass, any part of the equipment of his trade would, in a measure, have answered my purpose, and I felt confident that I could discover something which was authentic. You know what a queer lot of junk I have gathered together in this studio, and, as I ran across it in all sorts of out-of-the-way and unexpected places, one thing has impressed itself forcibly upon my mind: That is, that except as a result of shipwreck or conflagration, an object which has intrinsic value, possesses great beauty, or is of great historical interest, is never permanently lost. It may pass to the possession of an owner who is totally ignorant of its value or history, and remain undiscovered for an indefinite time, but, sooner or later, it is rediscovered.

"You will see that I have reason to believe this if you remember the death-masks of famous people which have been found in out-of-the-way places, the lost masterpieces of art which have been rescued from the dust and oblivion of old garrets, and the interesting relics of past ages which eventually appear in the museums after all trace of them has been lost for centuries. It was with this theory in my mind that I started out on the search for something which had been a possession of Blackbeard's."

"But things of the kind you speak of were not unpleasant to preserve," I objected, involuntarily sniffing at the mummied head.

"Nor is that—except for the ugly mug of it," replied Tommy, as my nose convinced me that there was nothing but a rather agreeable spicy odor about it. "Most of the things here which I have unearthed I came upon unexpectedly; they fell into my hands when I was just looking about queer collec-

tions on general principles; but when I found this I was making a systematic search with a definite object in view.

"One circumstance favored me: Blackbeard had obligingly ended his career in the Carolinas, the most conservative of all the colonies. Its traditions have been preserved, and the names which are prominent in South Carolina to-day are the same which were borne by the men who resented and resisted the piratical invasion of their coasts, and dinners are still served in several of the old dining-rooms where jollifications were held to celebrate the destruction of the buccaneers who had humiliated and oppressed them.

"The head of the pirate captain had been so prominently displayed that I became convinced that it still rested in some forgotten corner of the place upon which Blackbeard had levied tribute, a community which fire, earthquake, and the ravages of civil war have been unable to shake from its foundations of conservatism.

"I won't go into the details of my search for it, the many disappointments which I met with, and the unexpected good fortune through which I stumbled upon it, but I did find it, as you can see for yourself, and under such circumstances that I pledge you my word there is not the slightest doubt as to its authenticity, even if the marked and unusual characteristics which it displays did not stamp it as the head of Blackbeard."

Incredible as the whole thing seemed, a cold shiver went through me as I realized that what Tommy said was true, and that the head was really that of the pirate. The sixth sense which I had developed from constant association with Tommy—the sensitiveness to impressions transmitted by inanimate objects which possessed tragic associations—was at work, and in my imagination I rehabilitated the horrible face before me. I could see the cruel eyes of the monster shining from the empty eye-sockets, the smoke from the lighted fuses which he had been wont to stick into his hair and beard when going into action curling about his head, while the

shrunk lips seemed to be snarling the curses and obscenity for which he was famous. I was convinced, but Tommy insisted upon clinching his identification.

"If you will look at the knot of the rope in the hair, you will see that it was tied by a sailor to withstand a hard strain," he continued. "It was so secure that the knot was never unfastened, but the rope was cut above it. An examination of the stump of the neck shows that the head was not cut off with the clean stroke of the headsmen's ax; it was hacked off with a cutlass in the hands of an inexperienced bungler, and there is a gash in the back of the head where he made a miscue. The heads of traitors which were exposed after execution were impaled on pikes, but this head was suspended by that rope in the hair."

I touched the loathsome thing gingerly, but my interest was so aroused that it overcame my repulsion, and I made a careful examination, verifying each of Tommy's statements. When I had finished, Tommy threw a cloth over it, and I breathed a sigh of relief when the ghastly face was hidden from view.

"I throw up my hands, Tommy," I said penitently. "It is a thing which I would never have believed possible if any one else had told me of it. Now that you have discovered it, of what possible use can it be?"

"You ought to know enough of my methods to make a shrewd guess as to how I shall employ it," he answered, and I could see that he was elated by the victory which he had gained over my unbelief. "Given a proper subject in the hypnotic trance, I can, by placing him in actual contact with this skull, make him go through, for our benefit, any scene in the merry old pirate's career. Of course, I must get him absolutely under my control by repeated trances, for we can't afford to have an external stimulus interfere and awaken him at a critical moment. I have been pretty successful so far, and before long I shall have my subject so thoroughly imbued with the character and personality of Blackbeard that it will

not be necessary to use the skull at all."

"In which case, I think the quicker and deeper you bury the beastly thing, the better," I answered, with a shudder, as I glanced at the shrouded face. "It seems like a mean trick to take advantage of a hypnotized man to make him assume such a personality."

"I have been pretty successful in it so far, as I told you," answered Tommy, grinning. "I can't say that what I have learned of the old reprobate's habits convinces me that his contemporaries slandered him in the records they have left."

"Which reminds me that you haven't introduced me to your victim yet," I said.

"I thought it better to make you familiar with the properties first," answered Tommy, laughing. "He's asleep in Lingard's old studio, but I'll have him out." There was no further need for secrecy about the private passage between the two buildings, but Tommy had not changed it in any way, and still kept both apartments. I watched him curiously as he slid back the panel and went into the next building, from which he returned in a few minutes, followed by a young giant in pajamas who yawned and rubbed his eyes as he shuffled across the floor in his bath-slippers.

"You-all don't have any regard for my beauty sleep, and I reckon I need it as badly as any man that was ever bo'n," he said good-naturedly, after we had been introduced; and as I caught a good view of his face in the light I mentally agreed with him.

He certainly was not handsome, but there was something attractive in his very ugliness, for the face was masterful and strong. Hair as black as night, with shaggy eyebrows and deep-set eyes which matched it in inkiness; irregular features and high cheek-bones covered with a swarthy skin—these gave him the appearance of an Indian, which was belied by the heavy, blue-black stubble of a twenty-four hours' unshaven chin.

There was an expression of easy good nature about the large mouth

which redeemed its ugliness, and after sizing up the massive chest and the swelling muscles of the powerful arms which the thin silk of the pajamas could not conceal, I came to the conclusion that the good nature was a fortunate attribute, for I had experienced the danger of dealing with an angry man in a hypnotic trance.

"You needn't get too wide awake, Rounsival," said Tommy, looking at him steadily. "Help yourself to a highball if you like, to brush the cobwebs out of your brain."

"No, suh, not for me," answered Rounsival, with the pleasant drawl and in the soft voice of a native of the Southland. "You-all seem to like the taste of weak toddy, but I was brought up to admire the flavor of undiluted liquor. Here's to you, gentlemen, and I'm more than pleased to make your acquaintance, suh." He tossed the contents of the glass—a liberal portion of neat whisky—into the cavern of a mouth, then dropped into a seat.

"Sorry to disturb you at this time of night, old chap, but you needn't keep awake, you know," continued Tommy. "In fact, I think you would find it more agreeable to go to sleep again. A man of your size needs lots of sleep, Rounsival."

I was watching Tommy closely, conscious from his manner that a critical moment was at hand, and I saw the same intense expression on his face which I had remarked when he fought for the psychical mastery over men from whom he wished to extract information which they were unwilling to furnish.

There was but a slight contest here; the lids slowly drooped over the black eyes as Tommy again and again suggested sleep, and in a few minutes the great body was relaxed, and Rounsival was in a deep slumber. Tommy made a few passes about his head and stroked his eyelids, and then turned to me with a significant gesture.

"That looked easy, didn't it?" he asked, grinning at me. "It was no child's play the first time, but he slides under now, like a turtle slipping from a

log. I discovered him in the backwoods of South Carolina when I was down there on my search, and to the best of my knowledge and belief he has never even heard of Blackbeard. I have never given him the slightest information about him, and I am sure that he never read about him, for the only books he knows are the *Farmer's Almanac* and the Bible. I think that I have eliminated every chance of fraud in his revelations."

He took the head from the table and placed it on a stand beside the sleeping man, and arranged one of the large hands comfortably upon it.

"I hope that you are not easily shocked," he said, when his arrangements were completed. "You must remember that the spirit which we are summoning from the past lived on the Spanish Main, and his morals and conversation were those of his time and environment, and not suited to the twentieth century home circle."

I laughingly assured him that I was hardened enough to stand anything I might hear, but I confess that my endurance was tested during the next hour. Tommy's admonition to keep quiet, and pay close attention to what he was about to do, was unnecessary, for the interest which his strange theories and discoveries had aroused in my mind made me alert to everything which passed.

"Now, Rounsival, until I tell you to awake, you will lose your identity," he commanded, speaking very distinctly, in a low voice, as he stood in front of the sleeping man. "You are not Ralph Rounsival; you are the man whose head rests beside you. You will think as he thought, speak with his voice, and do as he would have done. Do you understand?"

The closed eyelids fluttered for an instant, and there was an apparent effort to withdraw the hand which rested on the head, as if Rounsival were making an effort to escape from control, but when Tommy placed his hand on his forehead and repeated the commands, his subject became passive.

"He does seem to have an objection

to assuming that personality, doesn't he?" said Tommy, looking at him thoughtfully, when he was convinced that, at last, Rounsival was thoroughly under his control. "I wish that you hadn't suggested that to me, for it makes me feel a little guilty. I have noticed the same thing before; in fact, it was stronger than it is to-night, so I suppose he is getting accustomed to it. I should feel badly to have any harm come to him from it."

But whatever compunction or regret Tommy might have felt, it was not strong enough to make him forego his experiment, and he went the limit before he stopped.

For a straight hour Rounsival was transformed, to all intents and purposes, into Blackbeard, the pirate. I can't set his words on paper; his conversation and recitals are unfit for publication in these days, but, through the action of the man's subjective mind, influenced by the physical contact with the mummied head, there came from his lips the songs of the buccaneers' revelry, their cries and imprecations in battle, their scoffing and reviling of prisoners under torture; and we went through all the scenes of violence and debauchery which lent variety to their riotous existence.

The horror and brutality of it all, even in their moments of relaxation, were before us. Every detail of their lives on board ship and on shore he told us of, explaining the code of laws which they had framed to govern their conduct toward each other, and the division of their ill-gotten spoils.

But although Rounsival, playing the part of Blackbeard, did not hesitate to avow the most brutal crimes, and boasted of the ships they had captured, the barbarities which they had practised on their prisoners, and the immense treasure which had fallen into their hands, he was reticent about the disposition of the loot, and consigned his inquisitor to the devil with all the strength of his picturesque vocabulary when answers were insisted upon. Time and again Tommy reverted to this topic, only to be baffled in the same

way, and at last he turned to me with a gesture of weariness.

"I've been through this a dozen times, and it's always the same," he said. "I get him more completely under my control each occasion he yields to me, but on that one subject, which, unfortunately, is the only one which is of much practical value to us, I can't make him talk. If I could get the information I want, it would be a simple enough matter for us to go alone and get what we are after, but I am afraid we shall have to take him with us, and depend upon the influence of local surroundings to make him betray the hiding-place."

He commanded Rounsival to sleep for five minutes, and to awaken, oblivious of all that had passed, and then carefully replaced the head in the box.

It had been a wonderful exhibition, and I was thoroughly convinced of the genuineness of it all, for Rounsival's impersonation had been too perfect to be a piece of acting. Even his soft voice and pleasant accent had been lost, and he had shouted his information like a man who is accustomed to make his voice rise above the tumult of weather and riot, and his pronunciation had been that of an uneducated man of the past century, and plentifully interlarded with strange oaths and Spanish words. As he sat there in natural sleep, I found it hard to realize that a few minutes before he had bellowed out the life history of a bloody pirate, as if he were reciting an autobiography.

"I'll come around and breakfast with you in the morning, and we will talk things over," said Tommy, when I asked him about his further plans. "There are a lot of things to be attended to, and of course we want to get off for the Bahamas as soon as possible. We will have plenty of time to go into details during the voyage, and——"

He was interrupted by Rounsival, who stretched his great limbs, and awakened with a yawn.

"You-all must excuse me," he said, smiling at us apologetically. "I suddenly am ashamed of myself, but there's something about this place which

makes me fall asleep. I wonder if I have had dreams here," he continued slowly, as he looked about at the weird and curious decorations of the studio walls. "After forty winks in this room, I always wake up as tired as if I had done a hard day's work."

I looked at Tommy admiringly when he assured Rounsival that his sleep had apparently been as serene and peaceful as a baby's afternoon nap, and as I walked to my own rooms, I caught myself whistling one of the old buccaneer songs which had come from the lips of Rounsival.

II.

In spite of our greatest endeavor, it was two weeks before we were ready to sail for Nassau. Tommy had inveigled Rounsival from a South Carolina plantation—where the profits which he made from his rice crops just about sufficed to pay the interest on the mortgage—on the plea that he wished his advice in the selection of a place for rice culture in the West Indies, and, until they were ready to start, he employed him as private secretary on a salary which seemed to the young giant munificent.

In pursuance of this fiction, Tommy announced that he should explore the islands for a suitable place on his own boat, and accordingly we looked over the available yachts which were offered by the brokers, and finally purchased a schooner of fifty tons measurement, equipped with a gasoline auxiliary, for use in calm weather and about the harbors.

Rounsival, who regarded Tommy as a man of large wealth, would have been surprised if he could have known the straits we were in to raise the money for the purchase of the boat and the equipment for the voyage; but Tommy, serene in his confidence of the fortune which awaited us, did not hesitate to invest his last penny, and under the influence of his enthusiasm I did likewise.

The purchase of supplies, stores, and the general outfitting of the yacht, had been left to Rounsival and me, Tommy

giving us full lists of the articles needed, and devoting his entire time to the selection of the crew. While Rounsival was ignorant of the real purpose of the expedition, he had come to accept Tommy's eccentricities as a matter of course, and he went cheerfully about the purchase of firearms, excavating tools, and sundry other articles, which seemed out of place in the equipment of a yacht.

We were thrown much together during these two weeks of preparation, and, although I came to have a genuine fondness for the simple-minded and good-natured young Southerner, I could not rid myself of the feeling that, under his unvarying amiability, there lurked a capacity for ferocity and cruelty which might, under favorable conditions, be quickly developed. I could give no tangible reason for this impression, and Tommy laughed at me when I spoke to him about it.

"It is only the result of his extremely realistic impersonation of Blackbeard which you witnessed," he said, when I insisted that there must be something in it. "There never was a milder and kinder man than Rounsival, and, in spite of his great strength, he would not willingly harm a fly. That makes it a great deal pleasanter for us, for our association will necessarily be pretty intimate for the next few weeks; but if he had all the instincts of Teach himself, I would unhesitatingly employ him, for I can control him with a word, as you have seen."

"Just the same, I wish that you would exchange duties with me until we are ready to sail," I answered. "You have got to manage the man, and I think that the more you see of him the better you will understand him; and I am certainly capable of hiring a lot of sailors."

"You'll have to leave the selection of the crew to me," replied Tommy positively. "I have ideas of my own about the kind of men we want for this job, and a single mistake in picking them out might upset our whole plan."

He seemed so much in earnest on this point that I raised no further objection to the division of labor, but tried

to banish the disagreeable sensation of mistrust of Rounsival from my mind. Tommy was apparently hard to suit in his crew, and I rarely went to his studio without meeting on the stairs some man whose clothes and bearing stamped him as a seafarer. He spent much of his time at the shipping-offices, sailors' lodging-houses, and water-front saloons; but at last he announced that everything was ready, and we moved our personal belongings on board.

The chug-a-chug of the little *Mystic's* auxiliary was a welcome sound in my ears, when we finally, after two weeks of expectation and suppressed excitement, passed out of the Erie Basin, bound for the Southern Cross. The crew, dressed in spick-and-span new yacht uniforms, consisted of four men and a sailing-master, and I wondered that Tommy had devoted so much time to the selection of so small a number. We of the after-guard occupied the yacht's cabin, where we were served by a Chinese steward, who also did the cooking for the crew, and, despite his manifold duties, found ample leisure, which he employed in smoking a large silver pipe in the galley.

We were well outside Sandy Hook before Tommy found time to enlighten me upon what he had done and his future plans, for I, in accordance with our agreement, had left everything to him, and was simply going it blind. Rounsival was asleep in the cabin, and Tommy had the wheel, while I stretched out beside him, pipe in mouth, on the deck.

"We're in for it now, old chap," he said, grinning at me. "Off on a chase which has lured many a man before us, and I only hope that we shall have better luck than the thousand-and-one expeditions which have set out on like ventures."

I grunted out a hearty second to Tommy's wish, with a fervent addition that we might have favorable winds, for the *Mystic* seemed a pitifully small speck, now that we were out on the great ocean.

"I don't think this matter of treasure-hunting is a matter of pure luck,

though," he continued earnestly. "All of the other expeditions which I know anything about have depended upon some faded old document or chart of more than doubtful authenticity; but we have a human document with us which we know to be genuine, and employ methods of investigation which have hitherto been unknown. I hope that I haven't omitted anything in the preparations which will jeopardize our success, for pretty much all of our available capital is invested in this venture, and I don't want to come back to New York broke."

"Did you ever hear of a successful search for pirates' treasure?" I asked, as the disagreeable realization came to me that I would be in like condition if we found nothing. "Everybody knows the fabulous treasures which have been described by the writers of fiction, from the time Poe wrote 'The Gold-Bug'; but is there an authentic case on record?"

"Only one that I know of—the store of gold and precious stones which Kidd concealed on Gardiner's Island, and of which he himself disclosed the hiding-place, in hopes to save his neck. But that doesn't discourage me, for only a fool would tell of what he found, to raise a horde of claimants for a share; and if we are fortunate enough to win out, I don't believe that you will care to publish the account of our good fortune in the *Howler*."

"No, I don't think that I should," I answered, laughing. "I am unacquainted with so many of the important details that I couldn't write a satisfactory account in any case."

"I haven't meant to be unduly secretive, but I have had little time to give explanations," he said apologetically. "I knew that you would trust me, and that I could rely upon you thoroughly; but the selection of the crew was a vitally important matter, and I am glad to say that I have exactly the men I want. In the first place, there is the sailing-master, Jackson, who has been out of employment since he lost his ship on one of the Bahama cays a year ago; he was a great discovery."

"I shouldn't consider that a strong recommendation," I answered. "Any fool of a captain can lose a ship."

"It isn't as bad as it seems," replied Tommy. "The wreck was not his fault; it was due to a series of unavoidable accidents and changing currents; but the fact that it happened in the Bahamas makes him invaluable to us, for he has no affection for the inhabitants of the islands. He could have gotten his ship off if the wreckers, who are as bad as their forebears, the buccaneers, hadn't swarmed aboard soon after she touched and taken possession. As it was, they manhandled him to the limit, and he was lucky to get away with a broken head and the clothes on his back; and if we should have any trouble, and get into a fight, he would be worth a dozen men, on account of the old score he has to settle."

"Great Scott, Tommy! You don't expect to fight the whole British nation with this two-by-four yacht, do you?" I exclaimed, for violence had been left out of my calculations.

"Not if we can avoid it," he answered calmly; "but you never know what may happen, and our search may take us to some of the outlying islands, where there is mighty little recognition of law, and the king's writ does not run except during the brief semi-annual visits of the police officials. Under the English statutes treasure-trove reverts to the crown, and if we find anything we want to be prepared to get away with it, for as good American citizens we are not risking our lives and capital to enrich the royal family. That's why I was glad to get hold of Jackson, who is a good sailor, in spite of his misadventure, and he has the added qualification that he can be sent to sleep when I raise my finger."

"That's why you transformed your studio into a sailor's employment agency, is it?" I exclaimed, as the full significance of the scheme dawned upon me. "Were you experimenting with the other members of the crew, as well?"

"Every man Jack of 'em!" said Tommy triumphantly. "I had at least three

dozen shellbacks up there before I made my selection, and with the exception of Duck Sing, there isn't one of 'em who wouldn't step overboard and try to walk ashore, if I told him to, after working my hocus-pocus on him. I didn't bother with the Celestial, because he is stolid enough to mind his own business; and between experimenting with the crew, and pumping Blackbeard through the medium of the amiable Rounsival, your uncle Thomas Williams has had his hands full for the past two weeks. It's well worth the trouble, though, and in the near future I'll show you some stunts which will remove any doubts that may linger in your mind as to the power of hypnotism."

A cold shiver ran down my spine when I realized that Tommy, not satisfied with one subject at a time, was planning a wholesale demonstration of his powers. As he stood quietly at the wheel, skilfully managing the yacht that its sails might catch every puff of the light wind, he looked a perfect picture of self-confidence; but I reflected uncomfortably that history fails to record a case where the possession of absolute power has not ended in madness; and for the first, but not by any means the last, time on that memorable cruise I wished myself safely back in the vicinity of Park Row. But as I was in for it, without any possibility of backing out, I tried to make the best of it, and convince myself that in a man so practical as Tommy there would at least be a method in his madness.

The *Mystic* proved herself a good sea boat, and reasonably fast, and as Rounsival took several days to get his sea legs, Tommy and I found ample opportunity for private conversation. We decided that he should continue to be known as an artist after our arrival at Nassau, while I should pose as a naturalist, investigating the insect life of the islands.

"Painters and bug hunters are regarded as more or less crazy by serious-minded people, and any eccentricities in their habits will be looked upon with amusement, and not excite undue curiosity and comment," said Tommy, as he

explained the necessity for making our proposed investigations without interruption from the natives. "That will account for any excursions we may wish to make, and I will industriously circulate the report that Rounsival is an expert voodoo man, and not a night-prowling negro will dare to come near us after sunset. He'll look the part before we get there, too, unless he develops into a better sailor."

I laughed as I remembered the Southerner's woebegone countenance when he poked his head out of his berth that morning, for his personal appearance had not improved since we left New York. He was unable to use a razor in the tumbling cabin, and the stubble of his blue-black beard imparted a sinister expression to his good-natured face as he impartially cursed the yacht, the ocean, and himself for being such a fool as to have quitted the dry land.

Tommy laughingly encouraged him to look on the bright side of things, and advised a turn on deck as a cure for seasickness; but his secretary, after making a couple of attempts to carry out the prescription, and clinging fearfully to the rail as he moved slowly about, disappeared into the cabin, where he resolutely remained.

The voyage was pleasant and without incident, and twelve days out from New York, Jackson announced, after taking the noon observation and working out our position on the chart, that if the wind held we should sight the Isaacs Light soon after sunset. There was an expression on Tommy's face when the announcement was made that convinced me that he was about to begin operations, but he was reticent during the afternoon, and left me to my own devices.

With my curiosity excited to the highest pitch, I watched as faithfully as the lookout for the first glimmer of the light; and when, soon after darkness had fallen, it showed above the horizon, I looked expectantly at Tommy, who walked to the wheel, and entered into conversation with Jackson.

By the faint light of the binnacle-

lamp I could see that he was making the familiar passes, and, accordingly, I was not surprised when the sailing-master mechanically relinquished the wheel, and passed me with unseeing eyes on his way to his cabin. Tommy motioned to me to take the wheel, and went below, returning in a few minutes with Rounsival, whom he quietly directed to sit on the deck beside me. Tommy left him there when he went forward to speak to the two sailors of the watch on deck, and in my excitement and nervousness I grasped the spokes of the steering-wheel so hard that my hands were cramped, as I saw that the Carolinian was also in the hypnotic trance.

Tommy waited in the companion-way until eight bells had struck, and the sailors of the watch below came to relieve their comrades, and I saw him speak to each of them earnestly, and make the same passes with his hands which he had used with Jackson, and when he came aft there was no doubt in my mind that all of them were absolutely under the control of his will. He looked very serious when he came up to me and glanced at Rounsival, to see that he was still oblivious.

"I am about to do a very risky thing, but the success or failure of our venture hinges upon the development of the next few minutes," he said earnestly. "You, Duck Sing, and myself are the only human beings on board who are not in a hypnotic trance, and I am going to put the yacht under the charge of Rounsival."

"Great Scott, Tommy! Are you trying to send us all to the bottom?" I protested. "It is bad enough to risk our own lives in this way, but you have no right to take advantage of the practical helplessness which you have brought upon the others with your infernal hypnotism. The man has never been out of sight of land before, and doesn't know the mainmast from the rudder."

"Not as Ralph Rounsival, but he will assume command in the character of Teach," answered Tommy determinedly. "I shall stand by to see that we don't get into a scrape, but it is an ex-

periment which I am bound to make. You know how Rounsival fought me off when I tried to get information from him about the hiding-place of the treasure, when you saw him in the hypnotic trance. I have had the same experience with him at every *séance* since then, and my only hope is that he may, under the added influence of familiar surroundings, betray the secret unwittingly, and lead us to the place. We are now in the region which Blackbeard knew as well as you know Broadway, and if it does not all come back to Rounsival when he plays the part, there is mighty small chance that he will help us to locate the treasure. This experiment to-night is only a preliminary, but it will show us what we can count upon, and I am anxious to see if I can rely upon my hypnotism to control the crew, if it should be necessary."

The yellow disk of the moon was beginning to show above the horizon, and I knew that in ten minutes the surface of the ocean would be as light as day. The yacht was sailing easily before a steady breeze, and I felt that with Tommy near there would be comparatively little danger in the experiment, so I raised no further objections. Tommy leaned over the Carolinian, who was apparently in a deep slumber, and spoke to him earnestly.

"Now, Rounsival, you will once more become Blackbeard, but this time you must be the man himself, and act without direction from me. We are nearing the Bahamas, and there seems to be some sort of a signal light on the Isaacs, which bears two points off the starboard bow. We are on the way back to Nassau, and I want you to take command of the ship, and handle it in the character of Edward Teach, as he would have handled it during his lifetime." Tommy glanced around to see that everything was in order, and to give his commands time to sink deeply into Rounsival's mind. "Remember that you are not Ralph Rounsival, but Blackbeard, the buccaneer, and take charge of this ship," he said sharply; and the words were no sooner out of his mouth than there was a most re-

markable transformation in the sleeping man.

In the studio experiment Rounsival had resisted Tommy when ordered to assume the personality of Blackbeard, but now it seemed as if he had only been awaiting the chance. The landsman, who had been a dejected sufferer from seasickness, clinging desperately to whatever was in reach on the rare occasions when he could be induced to venture on the plunging deck, instantly became the sailor, skilful in keeping his footing, and alert to everything which was going on. His eyes quickly took in every detail on deck and aloft, and without ceremony he jostled me roughly aside and took the wheel, while he bellowed out orders, accompanied by curses and threats, to the crew. His commands were obeyed with alacrity, and I noticed that when the sails were finally set to his satisfaction, there was a sensible increase in the speed of the yacht.

"The old reprobate didn't rule his crew with soft words and kindness, but he certainly knew his business," muttered Tommy in my ear, as we watched the skilful handling of the yacht.

I was too dumfounded to answer, for the uncanniness of the whole proceeding was beyond words. I knew that piracy in these waters had long since been suppressed, and that we were in the direct line of the great traffic to the West Indies, which went its way peacefully, and exposed only to the dangers of ordinary navigation, but Tommy's necromancy had rolled back the flight of time, and again brought to the surface a buccaneer ship under the command of the most bloodthirsty pirate who had ever ravaged these seas.

I was surprised that Duck Sing, whose attention was attracted by the unwonted tumult on deck, did not give

howl of terror when he saw the figure of Rounsival at the wheel, but he simply muttered: "Him belong clazy;" and with Oriental impassiveness retired again to the galley to peacefully continue his smoking.

Rounsival's eyes were everywhere; the yacht was thoroughly under his

control, and in the tricky moonlight he was a terrible figure as he stood at the wheel. Every trace of the good nature which was the Southerner's most pleasing characteristic had disappeared, and the blackness of the stubble which covered his chin gave his face a marked resemblance to the pirate whose beard had gained him his nickname.

He muttered to himself as he surveyed the unfamiliar deck and rigging, but no small detail could distract his attention from his chosen calling, and he suddenly broke out with a volley of curses at the lookout, and promised to slice off most of his anatomy piecemeal for not reporting a sail, which was in plain view, creeping along to windward.

Every savage instinct of the monster was aroused as he watched the approaching vessel, and he shouted his orders to clear the ship for action, to open the magazines, and cast loose the guns when he whirled the wheel around, throwing the yacht up into the wind, and laying a course which would intercept her.

"He's playing the game with a vengeance," exclaimed Tommy, as we admired the smart seamanship. "I'll wager that if I didn't interfere he would lay us alongside of that hooker and treat us to the spectacle of a piratical attack à la Blackbeard. I sent Jackson to his bunk because I was afraid that Teach would bully him into consciousness if he remained on deck, but it's a pity that he is not here to take a lesson from the pirate in seamanship. Stand by, now, to take the wheel, and put her back on her course, for I am going to wake him up before he gets us all hanged for piracy."

He moved close to Rounsival, and ordered him to go below, get into his bunk, and drop off into a natural sleep; but, although he repeated the command three times, there was no sign of obedience on the part of his subject. Tommy looked puzzled, but he quietly passed behind the man at the wheel and placed his hands over his eyes, at the same time shouting his orders in his ear, and he was at last obeyed, although

it seemed to me that Rounsival was most reluctant to relinquish his grasp on the spokes of the wheel. I made no comment, but quietly put the yacht back on her course, and Tommy sent the watch below to their hammocks, and allowed the sailors who remained on deck to come out of their trance.

"Well, what did you think of it?" he asked triumphantly, when the *Mystic* was once more a peaceful craft.

"I think it's too blamed near the real thing to be comfortable," I answered uneasily. "You could hardly lay the ghost which you raised, and in five minutes more there would have been murder done. Tommy, you are playing the devil with poor Rounsival; there was murder in his eyes when he put the helm over, and all of your influence could barely make him relinquish his prey and forget the lust for blood and plunder. We have no right to play with a human soul in that way, simply to enrich ourselves."

"My conscience does not trouble me on that score," replied Tommy easily. "If we pull this thing off, and Rounsival's performance to-night convinces me that he will lead us to the treasure, if there is anything there, I'll give him a final command to absolutely forget everything which he has done in the hypnotic trance, and send him back to South Carolina and the simple life with his pockets full of money. He won't be a bit the worse for his experience, and I happen to know that the money will be a grateful relief to him and to those dependent upon him."

"Just the same, he was the reincarnation of Blackbeard as he stood here," I replied, still worried and unconvinced. "It was the face of that horrible head come to life."

"I saw that likeness, and I wondered if you noticed it, too," he answered, looking at me curiously. "Perhaps I am playing with fire, and will get my fingers burned, but the stake is large enough to make the game worth while."

For the first time in all my experience with Tommy Williams I was conscious that he was having a struggle to convince himself that his methods were

absolutely justifiable, and as he stood before me, there was a trace of indecision on his white face which I had never seen there before.

Another word from me would have decided the issue, and I have no doubt that we should have returned to New York and abandoned our search; but I did not say it, and the yacht continued on her course, carrying us to dangers which we little dreamed of in our covetousness, for the hidden treasures which had been the reward of the murder and rapine of the pirates who harried the peaceful commerce of the West Indies and the Spanish Main.

He quickly regained control of himself, and whistled as he went forward to arouse Jackson; and as I steered the yacht on her course for the Hole in the Wall, I felt that the spirits of those whose treasures had been wrested from them, and who had met violent deaths on that ghostly sheet of water, were rising from it to warn me that Tommy and I were selling our souls to the devil.

III.

The harbor of Nassau is one of the beautiful spots of the earth, and when we glided past the grim walls of old Fort Charlotte, and dropped anchor in the clear water, I did not wonder that the buccaneers, with practically all of the West Indies to choose from, had selected it as their chief abiding-place.

The town is built on a comparatively narrow strip between the water and a steep hill, the more pretentious residences—which are surrounded with large grounds enclosed in high stone walls—on the higher land at the back.

High above the town, rising through the trees which have been allowed to grow up about it in these piping times of peace, stood Fort Fincastle, a curious structure having the appearance of an old side-wheel steamer; and Tommy looked at me significantly as he pointed it out.

We had come in at sunrise, and the town was barely awake; but after two weeks of confinement in close quarters, we were all anxious to go on shore, and

soon had a boat in the water. Rounsival gave an exclamation of satisfaction when he jumped on the beach and felt the solid ground beneath his feet; but he swore roundly when I reminded him that he was on an island, and would have to venture again on the sea to reach his home.

"Perhaps you-all admire to be knocked about, day and night, on that sort of a contraption," he said, as he shook his fist at the anchored yacht; "but I reckon that I was designed by nature to plow the earth and not the bounding billow. It was suddenly most upsetting to my stomach."

We laughed at his frank acknowledgment, but I could not banish from my mind the vision of the man standing at the wheel and managing the yacht; and in the bright sunshine, with the busy, every-day life of the harbor going on about us, I could hardly believe that it had not all been a dream as I looked at the good-natured, placid face of the Southerner.

Tommy, whose strange power had worked the transformation, seemed but a pygmy beside the other's great bulk, and it was difficult to think that by the power of suggestion he could have transformed this easy-going landlubber, even for a short time, into a ferocious pirate and a master seaman.

"I reckon that I'll ask you-all to excuse me," said Rounsival, when Tommy suggested that the quickest way to get the cramp out of our muscles would be to climb to the top of the hill. "Now that my feet are on something which has sense enough to stand still, my stomach is signaling for two weeks of overdue food, and I am going to find a restaurant and eat fo'teen breakfasts, which I seem to have missed."

The suggestion fitted Tommy's plans perfectly; and, after directing the Carolinian to a place where he could find food, we started together to walk through the quiet streets.

"We may as well start right in and get the lay of the land," said Tommy, who acted as guide. "This is a small community, and every one's business soon becomes known, so the quicker we

finish ours the better. I have nothing but the record of the finding of the quicksilver to indicate the probable scene of our investigations, but we'll go first to the place where it was unearthed."

A short walk brought us to the entrance of a cleft in the hillside, about thirty feet wide by two hundred feet long, bordered on either side by a wall of smooth rock. At the farther end was a long flight of steps, cut in the solid stone, and leading to the top of the hill which overlooks the town.

It was a picturesque place; but Tommy was intent upon the business in hand, and lost no time expatiating upon its beauty.

"There are any number of romantic stories told by the inhabitants to account for the existence of this cañon, and it is claimed that it was cut to give a protected passage from the lower town to the fort on the hill; but, as a matter of fact, it is nothing but an abandoned stone quarry," he said. "The rock for Fort Fincastle, the old building which we saw from the yacht, peeping through the trees, was cut out here, and it was during that excavating that the mercury was found. The work was done by convicts and negro slaves under military guard, and it is not probable that anything of value could have been discovered without leaving some record. It was at the top of this hill that I believe the treasure was secreted, and it is there that I shall conduct my first investigation. Let's climb up and see if there is anything to interfere with our search."

It was a hard climb in the tropical heat, but Tommy's energy was untiring, and under its stimulus we soon reached the top and came out near the fort. The view from the hill, with the town spread out in a long line of white, the brilliant water of the harbor in front of it, and the deep blue of the ocean beyond, was magnificent; but Tommy had eyes only for the surface of the ground about us, which was thickly covered by a growth of brush and scrub trees.

"That looks promising!" he ex-

claimed, as he surveyed the miniature jungle. "In this soil it must have taken that stuff a great many years to attain its growth, and it proves that there has been no digging about here for several generations. We couldn't have asked for a more favorable place for our explorations."

There was little sign of life about the place. A half-dozen tumble-down negro huts were scattered about the old fort which crowned the hill, and Tommy informed me that the ruin itself was garrisoned only by a signalman, who slept in the town at night.

"There are no soldiers on the island now, you know," he explained. "The power of England is represented by a single white officer, commanding about fifty black constables. If we should have any trouble, I think that Rounsival could clean out the lot, especially if he happened to be representing Blackbeard at the time."

Tommy's remark made me uneasy, for, while I knew that he would be as discreet as possible in the prosecution of the search, I realized that he was in such deadly earnest that he would not hesitate to defy the whole colony if the occasion arose. I was keen after the treasure, but I looked on the whole venture as a speculation with a very doubtful prospect of success, while Tommy was as confident as if it were already in his hands, and was figuring upon the possible complications which might arise to prevent its removal.

"I wish that you would not continually plan for trouble with the authorities," I protested. "I understood that this was simply a sort of burglarious expedition to be conducted without violence."

"It's a chicken-hearted housebreaker who won't put up an argument for his swag when he is carrying it off," answered Tommy, laughing. "Wait until your pockets are bulging with the pirates' loot, and see if you are not willing to fight to avoid its being taken from you to enrich King Edward. But if I am going to prevent trouble by giving the inhabitants an impression of our eccentricity, which will save us from

interruption, I must get to work. There is nothing more we can do here now."

And Tommy did get to work with a vengeance, looking up old acquaintances, to whom he introduced me as a naturalist, while he insisted upon a butterfly-net being much in evidence as a part of my outfit. He had me make a couple of night excursions with a lantern on the hilltop, ostensibly in search of night-flying insects; and three days after our arrival I could see the results of his industry in the attitude of the natives toward us.

The whites—a fine lot of colonial English—entertained us hospitably, and were kindness itself, but they evidently looked upon me as a harmless sort of a lunatic; while the blacks regarded Rounsival's ugly face and great body with terror, and avoided him, even in the daylight. Negro women herded their broods of children into their huts and slammed the doors as he walked about the country roads, and even the black constables shuffled down the side streets to avoid a glance from his black eyes when he walked through the town. Tommy chuckled when I spoke to him about it.

"The hints which I have dropped to the negro boatmen have worked, as you can see for yourself," he said. "They believe that he has the evil eye of the voodoo man, and can make their blood grow thin and their limbs shrivel up if he uses it on them. There isn't a nigger on the island who wouldn't turn gray with fear if Rounsival pointed a finger at him; and as for you, if we use a dozen lanterns on the hill at night, the townspeople will think it is only that crazy Yankee butterfly-chaser on a night hunt."

"Instead of two crazy men on a wild-geese chase," I added; for it was not pleasant, even for legitimate business reasons, to be regarded as an imbecile.

"We'll know before this time tomorrow whether it is or not," he replied quietly. "To-night Blackbeard will walk again, and we shall put him to the final test."

We were a silent trio as we climbed

the Queen's Stairway that night. Tommy led the way, the pirate's head in a bag, which was swung over his shoulder. Rounsival, with closed eyes but unflinching steps, came next, unconscious of his surroundings, in the deep hypnotic trance. I followed, carrying a short iron bar with pointed end, for use in exploring under the surface of the ground.

It was after midnight, but the great tropic moon, in a cloudless sky, made everything as light as day, and when we reached the top of the hill, Tommy stopped and drew the mummied head from the bag.

The time which we had looked forward to so eagerly during the weeks of preparation and the uncomfortable voyage had arrived, but now, at the supreme moment, when ten minutes more would decide the success or failure of our venture, I was oppressed with an indefinable feeling of dread, and if my parched lips and dry tongue could have been made to utter a sound, I should have begged Tommy to stop.

It had seemed simple enough, as we planned the expedition in the security and matter-of-fact surroundings of New York. There was probably a large amount of treasure idle in the ground, and we would go and take possession of it; but now that we had reached the scene of our operations, and were actually upon the ground which the pirates had held for their own, it was a different matter.

The weird surroundings, the deep shadows cast by the stunted trees and the frowning walls of the fort which overlooked us, gave the place an atmosphere which was not pleasant; and the horrible face of Blackbeard was more repulsive than ever as the empty eye-sockets stared up at me, while the shrunken lips seemed to be warning us to leave undisturbed the treasure which the pirate had waded through blood to acquire.

The place seemed to belong to the pirates again, and I had the feeling that the return of the skull, which had contained the master-brain of them all, had summoned the spirits of those who had

held high revel in the town to celebrate their cruel victories. Tommy may have felt the influence of the place, too; but he was not to be swerved from his purpose, and he placed Rounsival's hand upon the head, and his voice was perfectly steady when he spoke.

"Now, Rounsival, you will again become what this man was. You are not Rounsival, but the man who sailed away from here in the *Queen Anne's Revenge*, to plunder the American coast," he said. "Things have changed during your absence; behind you is a fort, which was built by the English who drove your companions from the island; beneath you is a town, which is controlled by them. The buccaneers have been hanged or driven to the four corners of the world. You, too, will be hanged if you fall into their hands; but for a short time you are free from fear of capture. You are alone upon this hilltop, and if you have anything to do before leaving the island you must make haste."

Tommy seized my arm and dragged me back into the bushes as he stopped speaking, and together we watched Rounsival from the shadow.

Again we saw the reincarnation of Blackbeard transform the peaceful face of the Southerner into a visage of viciousness and cruelty—a thing to give one a nightmare for a year.

For a moment he stared about him in bewilderment, and then, as he realized the full significance of the stern fort at his back, and the peaceful city beneath him, he burst out into the vilest language I had ever listened to.

He cursed his old lieutenant, Hornigold, and many others whose names were unfamiliar to me, for losing such an ideal base and allowing the dispersal of his followers, and consigned the conquering English to unmentionable perdition. His face was distorted with passion; it was that of a man at bay; filled with rage, and thirsting for revenge. But after the outburst had calmed him, his expression changed, and a crafty look came to his face as he looked furtively about to see that he was unobserved.

Tommy grasped my arm and pointed at him as he searched the ground with his eyes, apparently baffled by the change in the surroundings; but, after a few minutes, he got his bearings, and plunged confidently into the bushes.

We followed him; there was no reason for trying to make our pursuit a noiseless one, for Rounsival crashed through the brush, snapping off the dry branches and leaving a trail which a blind man could have followed.

He was like a hound nosing for a scent, rushing from side to side and circling through the brush; but at last he found what he was seeking, a rough block of coral standing some three feet above the ground in a small, clear space.

He took careful bearings from the rock to some object which we could not see, mumbling to himself a jargon which was unintelligible to us; but not one of his movements escaped us as we lay concealed in the thick brush at the edge of the clearing.

I could hear Tommy's quick breathing as he lay beside me, and could feel my heart beating like a trip-hammer, when, at last, satisfied as to his bearings, Rounsival placed his back to the stone, and, with eyes fixed on some distant point, faced the sea and walked forward with carefully measured stride.

He counted the paces audibly: "One—two—three," and so on, to thirteen, as he pushed his way through the brush; then, with a snarl like a tiger jumping on its prey, he dropped on his knees and commenced tearing at the earth with his bare hands, casting aside the small stones and furiously uprooting the bushes and stunted trees.

I was no longer skeptical, for, seeing the wild gleam of covetousness in the man's eyes as he tore at the ground like a wild beast, I knew that Blackbeard, reincarnated in Rounsival, had returned to take from its hiding-place the fortune which he had committed the blackest of crimes and foulest of murders to accumulate.

Now that the treasure seemed absolutely within our reach, the lust for

wealth filled my own heart, and I knew that Tommy was right; I would have fought the whole world to obtain and keep possession of it.

Tommy was as excited as I; and, forgetting in his elation that it was not Rounsival, but Blackbeard, who was in front of us, he sprang forward with a cry of triumph to restrain the man whose finger-tips were torn and bleeding from clawing at the rough and stony ground.

Rounsival, startled at the interruption, jumped to his feet, and, turning, uttered a curse as his great fist shot out and took Tommy fairly on the point of the jaw.

Until that moment the thing had seemed ridiculously easy; everything had gone exactly as Tommy had planned that it should go, and I had regarded the treasure as practically within our reach; but as I stood facing the reincarnation of the pirate, his face distorted with rage as he glared at me over the unconscious form of the man who had summoned him back from the spirit world, there seemed small chance that either of us would ever enjoy the spending of it, and willingly I would have given my prospective share in the profits of the venture to be safely back with Tommy in New York, and to know that Rounsival was devoting his time to rice culture in South Carolina.

He wasted no time in discussion, but, with a shout of rage, sprang for me. Although I had no wish to harm him, the instinct of self-preservation made me parry his attack with the only weapon at my disposal, the iron rod which I had brought to take earth soundings. It held him off for a moment, but as I was forced to give ground before the onset of his great frame, I stepped back; my foot struck the mummied head which Tommy had dropped on the ground, and the rod flew from my hand as I fell.

I was confused by the fall, but instinctively struggled to my feet, expecting every moment to feel the great hands at my throat; but Rounsival stood there as if he were turned to stone, staring at the face of Black-

beard, which was turned toward him in the bright moonlight. The fierce light of combat had died out in his eyes, and the face which had been so terrible as he attacked me showed every evidence of abject terror.

I watched him for a moment in silence; but, fearing a renewal of his attack, I groped about for the rod. A twig snapped under my foot, and the sound seemed to recall him to his surroundings; but instead of rushing for me as I expected he would, he turned and, with a cry of fear, fled through the brush in the direction of the wild country back of the town.

I heard him crashing through the woods; and, satisfied that the danger of immediate attack was over, I turned my attention to Tommy, who had not stirred since Rounsival struck him.

He was fairly knockéd out; but to my great relief he opened his eyes and moved his limbs when I bent over him. It took him a good ten minutes to recover his scattered wits; then he looked about inquiringly for the man who had dealt him the blow.

"What's become of the beggar?" he mumbled, as he staggered to his feet and looked in all directions.

I had been so frightened that I could not speak, for it seemed incredible that any man could have received that terrific blow and ever recover his senses; but Tommy's question restored the power of speech, and I gave free rein to my tongue.

"He's taken to the woods, confound you! and a pretty mess you've gotten us into!" I exclaimed indignantly. "It is not Rounsival, the peaceful rice planter, who is wandering about, but the devil whom you raised and neglected to lay; and you have turned loose a bloody pirate to ravage this peaceful community."

Tommy's hands were going carefully over his face, as if making an inventory of his features, to be sure that none were missing, and he apparently paid little attention to my words, or did not understand them.

"If the jolt which he gave me has not impaired my memory, he betrayed

the secret which we have been trying to discover before he struck me," he answered obstinately. "That's a matter of prime importance which I must settle definitely. Where's that rod?"

His persistency was too much for me, and I found the rod and handed it to him without further remark. Tommy furiously prodded the earth about him, driving the rod in all directions; but it never penetrated more than six inches before striking the solid rock.

In my excitement I forgot Rounsival and the serious position in which his escape placed us, as he drew near the spot where the great hands had uprooted the bushes, and I gave a gasp of relief when the rod went down into the earth a good four feet, and Tommy straightened up and uttered a cry of victory.

"I have it, by all that's holy!" he exclaimed. "This thing has struck wood. Feel it!"

I grasped the iron and worked it up and down, and there was no question but that the contact was with something softer than the coral rock.

Again and again we plunged the rod into the earth until we had accurately mapped the extent on the surface where the soil was deep—an oblong space about six by three feet in size—and then Tommy and I faced each other, our brows wet with perspiration and our faces white and drawn.

I knew that Tommy must be suffering pain from the blow which he had received, but that could not account for his air of depression and despair as he walked back to the stone which had been Blackbeard's landmark, and, leaning against it, buried his face in his hands.

"Gold and precious stones there may be in that place, but I'd give my share of it, no matter how great the treasure may be, if we were safely out of this with Rounsival on board and no harm done," he groaned.

Everything for which he had planned and worked for months had come to him; the spot where Blackbeard had buried his ill-gotten gains was located;

the treasure was fairly within our grasp; but now that realization had succeeded anxiety and anticipation, he appreciated the gravity of our position and broke down. It seemed far more serious to him than it had appeared to me, for, in spite of his pain and depression, he pulled himself together and prepared to act.

"We must find him at all cost," he muttered. "Which way did he go?"

I pointed out the line of flight, and we followed it, Tommy picking up the head of Blackbeard as we passed, until the trail led us to a country road, where all trace of it was lost. It was useless for us, ignorant of the country, and exhausted by the exciting experiences through which we had passed, to try to track him farther in the night, and, almost without speaking, we returned to the harbor and went on board the yacht.

"You don't know the worst of it, yet," groaned Tommy, as he unlocked the door of a small safe which he had installed in the cabin. "You will have to read it for yourself, for my head is buzzing like a beehive. Look through those papers, and you will appreciate what a nasty mess we are in."

He threw a bundle of old documents on the table, and when I unfastened the faded tape which held them together, I found that they were numbered and endorsed in his handwriting, and arranged in regular order.

The first one was an imposing-looking document with large seals, the official report of the capture, summary trial, and execution of a gang of pirates which had taken place at Nassau in 1718, the year following the death of Blackbeard. Captain Hornigold, Teach's trusted lieutenant, whom he had sent back to take command of the base while he continued to ravage the Atlantic coast, had turned traitor, accepted the king's pardon, and, to prove his sincerity and save his own neck, turned over eight of his followers to the expedition which had been sent out from England to reclaim the islands. They were tried before a court composed of officers of the expedition, and

on the evidence, a full summary of which was given, and which proved that they had merited their fate a dozen times over, they were all condemned.

The troops which had accompanied the expedition were busily employed in completing the fortifications in anticipation of war with Spain, and they were so few in number that men could not be spared to guard the prisoners, so the execution was set for the day following the trial.

Seven of them were accordingly hanged on the ramparts of the unfinished fort, while the eighth, a man named Ronceville, was reprieved after the noose had been adjusted about his neck, and sent to carry the news of the restoration of law and order to the freebooters on the outlying islands of the Bahamas. I read the faded writing carefully, then looked at Tommy inquiringly.

"This is an interesting record of the end of piracy here, but I don't find anything which is of particular significance to us," I said.

"That is only a link in the chain," replied Tommy. "The history of Blackbeard's residence and death in the Carolinas is another link, but we need not go over that again. The connection between the two events of special importance to us is this man Ronceville, who was pardoned on the gallows, and of whose subsequent career there is no mention in the records of this colony. I found a further record of him, however, in the diary of a citizen of Charleston, who was a member of the expedition which destroyed Blackbeard's band. It was an interesting journal, as carefully kept as the famous Pepys' record of his times, but the family would not let me take a copy of it.

"It described the expedition and the execution of the pirates in Charleston, and mentioned the fact that a few months later an old follower of Blackbeard's, named Ronceville, had appeared in the town. The colonists were satiated with blood, but they wished no visible reminder of the days of their oppression and humiliation; and the new arrival and Blackbeard's

widow, whose condition should have earned their pity, were driven together from the town into the outlying wilderness, the head of Teach tied about the outlaw's neck, as a reminder of what would be done to him if he returned."

"And this man Ronceville, what became of him?" I asked eagerly, as I began to guess the connection which existed between him and the man whom we had brought with us from New York.

"He was the same man who was condemned and pardoned here, as you have probably guessed," answered Tommy. "I could find no further trace of him in the history and records of Charleston, but I instituted a thorough search of the State for any of his descendants. I learned of a family named Rounsival who had lived for generations on the same plantation, about a hundred miles from there. My mind was filled with the history of the buccaneers, as you can imagine, and when I saw our friend Ralph, it immediately occurred to me that, given a course of debauchery and a life of violence and crime for a few years, he would, if his beard were allowed to grow, be the living image of the man whose character I have made him assume, to my great sorrow.

"I arranged to stay at his house, a queer, old, rambling structure of no particular style of architecture, built about the original log-cabin which Ronceville, the pirate, had erected with his own hands, and added to as the whims or necessities of succeeding owners dictated. I was given free run of the place, with permission to rummage the dusty old attics, filled with the accumulations of articles discarded by many generations; while Rounsival, laughing at the taste which led me to forego the pleasures of out-of-doors to delve in the dust of the past, went about his usual avocation on the plantation.

"But I found what I was looking for, worse luck," he continued, after he had described the hopes and disappointments of his search. "The head was there, safely preserved in a box which had been for years hidden under a pile

of discarded furniture; it was just as you have seen it, but in the box was also this manuscript."

He pointed out the remaining paper which had been in the package, and asked me to read it for myself. It was in the handwriting of an educated man, and, making allowance for the long, involved sentences which were peculiar to the time, it was an unexpected composition by the hand of a freebooter and pirate. It bore the date of 1735, and was in perfect preservation. The preamble was as follows:

I, George de Ronceville, sometime of France and later of the Free Company of Buccaneers of the Spanish Main, but now by the grace of God a citizen of his Majesty's Colony of Carolina, where I have found repentance for my sinful life after years of crime and debauchery, do set down this truthful history of my life to the end that a record of my wickedness may be preserved as a warning, and that the grace which I have found in my old age may prove to whomsoever shall read this writing that although his sins may be as black as night, yet may they be washed away.

It described in detail his early life, spent at the French court, his disgrace in his native country, and his flight to join the buccaneers, where any man who could wield a sword was welcomed, regardless of his past life or nationality. The record of his career with them, the crimes which he had committed, and the cruelty he had practised, were pitilessly set down, and proved that he had been a trusted follower of Teach, emulating him in courage, and exceeding him in brutality.

He had walked to the place of execution in Nassau with a jeer on his lips, but when he was reprieved, and left the ramparts where the bodies of his companions were writhing in the air, the horror of his past life appeared to him, and he resolved to become an honest man.

He told of his wanderings through the Bahamas, and his arrival at Charleston, where the citizens placed no belief in his reformation and drove him out; and then, with the simple candor with which he had related his crimes, he set forth his kindness to the

young girl who had been banished with him. They had married after the birth of Blackbeard's posthumous child, and he thankfully acknowledged the happiness which had come to them in their subsequent married life. The manuscript concluded:

And now, in the firm belief that I have atoned for the misdeeds of my youth in the years which I have tried to live righteously, and that I have obtained forgiveness for my sins, which were as scarlet, I commit this to paper, that the misdeeds which brought me into the shadow of the gallows-tree and caused me to be driven forth from association with all honest men may prove a warning. I have received punishment, and have had withheld the crowning sign of forgiveness, in that no child of my own has been born to my wife to comfort our declining years; but I have tried to return good for evil and instil the love of truth and righteousness in the mind of the son of the man who led me far along the path to eternal damnation. That there may be forever a warning to him and his descendants should temptation assail them to do as we have done, this true account of the punishment of the wicked and the grace which may be found through repentance I shall enclose in the case with the head of him whom I truly believe to have been possessed of many devils: trusting that this horrible reminder of the fate of his wicked ancestor may incline his feet to the straight and narrow path which leads to salvation. That there may be no reminder of the name which his crimes have made infamous before he was cut down in his wickedness, I have caused his son to bear my own name, which I trust has been washed clear of the stains with which the crimes and excesses of my wicked youth befouled it.

"Well!" exclaimed Tommy impatiently, as I finished reading the document. "Now that it has been made clear to you that he is a direct descendant of Teach, do you see what a devil of a fix we are in? It isn't simply a man in a hypnotic trance, as irresponsible as a lunatic, whom I have let loose, but the perfect impersonation of one of the worst fiends who ever sailed the seas or walked the earth. It gives me the shivers when I think of what he may do to any one whom he may run foul of, for Blackbeard spared neither man, woman, nor child, and his instinct was to kill. I have cause to know that this blessed descendant of his has the strength of an

ox, too, for he jarred loose every tooth in my head with that one blow," he concluded, as he tenderly rubbed his chin.

Duck Sing brought in our early coffee, and as I looked at his placid, smiling face, and heard the soft voices of the negro fishermen whose boats were passing, I could scarcely believe, in spite of all the documentary evidence before me, that I was not the victim of a fantastic dream. Things looked so natural and peaceful in the snug cabin, with the bright morning sunlight pouring through the port-holes, that if Tommy's face, white with pain and lined with anxiety, had not been before me, I should have doubted the evidence of my own senses.

"There is only one thing we can do," I suggested finally; and Tommy looked at me hopefully. "We must go ashore and notify the authorities that Rounsival has gone insane, and ask their help in capturing him."

"That's just the one thing we can't do!" protested Tommy irritably. "Confound it, man! can't you realize that it is Blackbeard who is loose, not Rounsival? Remember the history of the brute; he never gave nor asked for quarter; and then imagine what would happen if those black constables tried to take him! He would fight like a cornered rat and kill a dozen of them before they shot him down."

"I don't believe they would put up much of a fight against the power of voodoo," I answered, smiling at the recollection of the pains they had taken to avoid him. "They seemed in mortal terror of him when he was in his right mind, and I don't believe they would face him now."

"Don't be fooled by what you saw of their actions singly," answered Tommy, shaking his head. "If they went out for him in force, under the command of a white officer, it would end in a tragedy, for Rounsival would fight to the end; and for self-preservation they would try to kill him before he could work a charm on them."

"You don't seem to be worried about what might happen to the constables,"

I said. "Your anxiety is all for Rounsival."

"It is—mostly," replied Tommy gloomily. "If the worst comes, and he disposes of a few constables, I shall feel badly, of course; but, after all, that is one of the risks which they are paid to run, and it is all in the day's work. But I should feel directly and personally responsible if harm should come to Rounsival, for it was I who inveigled him away from a peaceful home and roused in him all the ferocity of that old pirate, which must have been latent in his blood."

"And how about the innocent islanders he may attack? Aren't we responsible for them, too?" I asked.

"Don't include yourself in this horrible mess, although I am counting upon your help to get me out of it," answered Tommy generously. "I'm responsible for the whole business, and on my head be it."

I protested that as I had expected to share equally in the profits I was prepared to take half of the ill fortune.

"But you did not understand all the circumstances, or you would probably have raised objections. There was no reason for my concealing the relationship from you, but the temptation to make a melodramatic finish was too strong for me to resist," confessed Tommy gloomily. "There is only one reparation I can make if he runs amuck and murders any of the natives, and that is a money payment; and as I know of but one way to get hold of the wherewithal, we must get that treasure, which I wish I had never dreamed of, safely under hatches."

"Perhaps it will come out all right," I said, trying to comfort him. "The daylight will probably bring Rounsival out of his trance, and we shall have him back here to-day, hale, hearty, and hungry, and none the worse for his night in the open."

"No such luck," said Tommy hopelessly. "That might happen if it were a simple case of trance, but you must count upon the terrible devil of heredity which has been roused in the man. It seemed unexpected good fortune to me

when I discovered that I controlled a subject in whose veins flowed the blood of the old pirate, but it is that very circumstance which has been our undoing. Repentance won't mend matters, so turn in, you, and get what sleep you can while I figure out some way to get the wild man on board. You may need all the strength you can muster when I call upon you for assistance."

IV.

Tommy looked years older when, after a few hours of troubled sleep, I rejoined him in the cabin, but all trace of hesitancy and indecision had disappeared, and he was once more the masterful and resourceful leader, with a well-developed plan of action mapped out in his own mind.

"First of all, the original purpose of the expedition must be carried out," he said positively, when I asked what solution of the problem he had found. "The possession of that treasure, which under pleasanter circumstances would have been a luxury, has now become a necessity. When we set out to find it we were acting from purely selfish motives, but now that we are in a bad fix—and liable to be in a worse one—we may need it to pay, as far as money can do it, for the injuries which may be inflicted upon innocent people as a result of our indiscretion."

"But, Tommy, that treasure—if treasure it is—has lain there undisturbed these two hundred years, and there is no prospect of any one interfering with it now," I protested. "Would it not be wiser for us to get hold of Rounsival before trying to remove it?"

"We shall do both at the same time," he answered. "I shall track down Rounsival, and you can do the digging and get the stuff on board."

I started to protest against this division of labor, but he impatiently motioned to me to be silent.

"I know the objections which you would raise. I have met them in my own mind while you slept. If I am lucky enough to find him, there will

be no more danger to me in tackling him alone than there would be if you were with me; for if it comes to a physical encounter, he could do for the both of us with one hand tied behind him. I know that I am running a risk, but I am trusting to my ability to awaken him before he gets a chance to harm me; and if I fail in that, I shall have to take the consequences of playing with fire. If you were with me, and he finished me up, he would make a clean sweep and murder you as well, unless you stopped him with a bullet, and, under the circumstances, I don't believe that you would have the heart to harm him."

"And you expect me to sit quietly twirling my thumbs while you go alone into the brush to face a madman with the strength of a giant and all the murderous instincts of Blackbeard back of it!" I exclaimed indignantly.

"There is no use in argument. The thing is settled, and you will have plenty to do," he replied firmly. "You are hereby appointed the entire committee of ways and means, and I expect you to get whatever is buried on the hill on board the yacht. I intended to have the manual labor done by the crew, after putting the men quietly to sleep, so that they would not ask troublesome questions afterward, but I imagine that you have had about enough of hypnotism."

"No more of it for me!" I exclaimed fervently. "I'd rather work the rest of my days in a treadmill than employ it to lighten my labor."

"I am beginning to appreciate that there are several thousand things which I don't understand about it," confessed Tommy, with the first trace of a smile which I had seen about his face since we fell into difficulties. "I have not lost faith in the power of the thing, but I realize that I can't always direct it, so we will leave it out of our calculations. To-night we will carry the excavating tools on shore, and together we will settle the question of what is buried in the place which Rounsival indicated; and if we find anything worth removing, I will leave you to attend to it. There is plenty of work

ahead, and now I shall try to get a little sleep while you go ashore and keep your ears open for any news of Rounsival which may have been brought in."

To the first part of the program I could offer no objection, for Tommy certainly needed sleep, and I accordingly ordered a boat and was rowed to the wharf.

My mind was filled with apprehension, but the normal appearance of Bay Street—the principal thoroughfare of the sleepy old town—reassured me; and after eavesdropping at the great silk cotton-tree in the square, where all the gossip of the negro population is re-tailed, I inquired casually at the police station if anything exciting had happened, and returned on board for dinner, no wiser than when I had left. Tommy, clean-shaven and immaculate, greeted me at the yacht's gangway, apparently refreshed by his nap and eager for information.

"I don't know whether to feel disappointed or relieved," he said, when I reported the negative results of my expedition. "At any rate, no news is good news, for the report of a tragedy would have spread quickly."

We lingered over our dinner, and killed time in getting the excavating tools together and wrapping them up so that their bulk and weight would not excite comment.

Tommy had thought of everything, and with our outfit we could have cracked a safe if necessary, but I looked at him anxiously as he carefully examined a revolver to see that it was properly loaded before slipping it into his pocket.

"My God, Tommy! Don't take that thing along!" I exclaimed. "This is enough like burglary, without adding the probability of murder to it."

"It has nothing to do with the treasure-hunt," he replied gravely; "but it may be of use to me in my search."

"Why, Tommy — you wouldn't — shoot the poor beggar—would you?" I stammered.

"No fear, old chap; but I may have to protect him," he answered. "Sup-

pose that he has turned loose and is pursued by a mob—he wouldn't be spared, even if I could bring him back to his normal self, unless I could hold it off; for, except as Blackbeard, he would not put up a fight."

I was ashamed that I had asked the question, for in my heart I knew that he would willingly sacrifice himself to save the man whom he had wronged.

I felt as if I were playing a part in a melodrama when we entered the small boat and rowed quietly to the landing-place in the moonlit harbor. The secrecy which we had been forced to observe in our preparations, the enforced idleness on the yacht through the long evening while we waited for the town to sink into slumber, and the mysterious errand upon which we were setting out, did not seem to belong to the actual life of this practical twentieth century; but the courteous greeting of the negro constable on duty at the wharf brought back the realities to me, and also the uncomfortable feeling that if he should take me into custody, the contents of the package which I carried under my arm could be considered as burglars' tools without much stretch of the imagination.

"We have troubles enough on hand without borrowing any," said Tommy irritably, when I told him the fear which had been in my mind. "This is a ticklish piece of business, and you are getting fussy."

I realized from his tone that his self-control was strained nearly to the breaking-point, and welcomed the physical exertion required to carry the tools up the Queen's Stairway as a safety-valve for the nervous tension.

Somehow the zest had gone from us, and now that we were actually about to satisfy our curiosity as to what was buried upon the hilltop, we went at it in a matter-of-fact way, for the exciting experience of the night before made the probability of unearthing a fortune seem a tame affair by comparison.

Tommy, with his jaw still aching from Rounsival's blow, and I, with the memory of his fierce attack upon me fresh in my mind, felt the neces-

sity for precaution; and when we reached the top of the stairway we crept noiselessly through the bushes, half expecting to find Rounsival watching over the treasure, the secret of whose hiding-place he had unwittingly betrayed; but so far as we could see we had the place absolutely to ourselves.

Everything was just as we had left it; the rod, which in our excitement we had forgotten to remove, was sticking in the ground where we had rammed it in taking the last sounding—a plain indication that no one had chanced upon the spot during the day. But, although we were alone, the influence of the spirit of Blackbeard was upon us, and after unwrapping the picks and shovels, we hesitated, each waiting for the other to make the first move.

For a good five minutes we stood there, stealing furtive glances at each other, and each manufacturing excuses for delay, until finally Tommy, with an oath which sounded strangely from his lips, stuck his spade into the ground.

The spell was broken, and after he had thrown the first spadeful of earth to one side we both worked furiously, the lust of gold in our hearts and all thought of danger forgotten. We were as oblivious as Rounsival had been when he clawed at the earth with his fingers, and had any one interrupted us we would have been dangerous men to encounter.

It was unaccustomed labor, but no navy ever dug harder than we did, until Tommy dropped to his knees and, with a cry of disappointment, picked out something from the soft dirt.

"What the devil have we struck—a private burying-ground?" he exclaimed, as he held the object up to the moonlight. "By all that's holy, I seem to be an expert at discovering pirates' skulls—first Blackbeard's, and now one of his companions! Look at it!"

I felt an almost hysterical desire to laugh when he handed it to me, and I saw that it was, in fact, a human skull. Either we had taken all these risks to find only a forgotten grave, or the whole thing was to develop according to the stories I had read in my boy-

hood, and we had come first to the evidence of the treachery of the chief, who, believing that dead men tell no tales, had murdered his assistants when the treasure was secreted, that he alone should know the hiding-place.

It all seemed like the performance of a well-known play. The moonlight effects, the drooping leaves of a royal palm, which cast their shadows across the hole, and, above all, Tommy's Mephistophelean face, strengthened the illusion; and as mechanically as if I were repeating stage directions I answered him:

"Why, of course it's a skull; didn't you know that it was one of the properties? Dig about a little and you will find the other; there are always two, you know."

"Damn it, man! are you gifted with second sight? Or are you playing a trick on me?" asked Tommy angrily, as he threw another skull out of the hole.

He kept on digging furiously, throwing out dirt and parts of the skeletons until his spade struck metal, when he leaned over and picked up a set of rusted leg irons, with moldy human bones still fast in the rings.

"This beats me," he said, as he looked at them in bewilderment. "What could Rounsival have been after? Was he trying to unearth the bodies of his followers, hanged in chains, to wreak a post-mortem revenge on their bones? This is a fine ending to all our dreams of wealth!"

He leaned on his spade while I examined the first skull carefully and handed it back to him with an exclamation of triumph.

"Look at that bunch of wool which is sticking to it!" I yelled. "There were no Africans among the buccancers, for negroes were chattels which would fetch money, and white recruits could be had for the asking. This man was never a follower of Blackbeard's, but a slave whose throat he cut with no more compunction than you would feel in killing a mosquito."

A rapid examination of the second skull showed that it was also that of a

negro, and as the truth dawned on us we again fell to with feverish haste to throw out the remainder of the dirt.

It did not take us long, for the cavity in the rock was not deep, and in a few minutes there lay exposed to the bright moonlight the tops of two chests, bound and clamped with iron, the wood as firm and solid as the day they were committed to the earth.

Neither of us spoke; we were panting from the unwonted exercise, and our muscles ached; but actuated by as guilty a fear as if we were burglarizing a bank, we climbed out of the hole and looked about carefully to see that we were not watched by spying eyes.

Reassured by the absolute silence of the night, Tommy quickly opened another parcel, and with the tools which it contained we pried open one of the chests without much difficulty.

We had expected to find treasure—it was that which had led us to undertake the expedition, but the contents of this one chest exceeded our wildest dreams.

There was no possibility of our removing the chests; it was a physical impossibility, for the one we had opened was filled to the brim with precious metals; bars of silver and ingots of gold, packed so closely together that we had difficulty in prying out some of the top layer to see what was underneath.

There was apparently nothing else in the chest. The pirate, more sophisticated than his ignorant followers, had evidently taken his share of the loot in articles of intrinsic value and small bulk, and while their booty had been squandered in riot and debauchery, he had carefully hidden his away against the time when he could return to civilization with a fortune so large that no questions would be asked.

"For God's sake put back the cover and hide it from sight!" exclaimed Tommy in a hoarse whisper. "We must not let it tempt us away from our duty. Hide it, man! Hide it, I tell you!"

I was no less agitated than he, but mechanically I closed the chest, and we

took up our spades and refilled the hole without speaking.

Tommy breathed a sigh of relief as we replaced the last of the earth and smoothed the surface of the ground, to remove as far as possible the evidences of our digging. His face looked very white in the moonlight when we had given the last pat to the earth with our spades and stood facing each other; and he placed both hands on my shoulders and spoke with trembling lips.

"We have found it; it is ours if we can get it safely away, but will it bring us happiness?" he said. "We have been fairly contented, and neither of us has ever felt want, but, so help me God! I have never known the horrors of covetousness until my eyes beheld the contents of that chest! Shall we leave it where it is and go back to earn our living by honest work, or take it at the risk of our eternal damnation?"

I was as agitated as Tommy, but I was numbed to a certain extent, for I had never been as confident as he, and our tremendous find was a shock. It took a moment for his suggestion to make an impression upon me, and then the idea that I might be called upon to relinquish the treasure which we had gone through so much to find angered me.

"Leave it!" I exclaimed. "Give up the fortune which is within our grasp! I will fight the whole world, if need be, in order to keep it. Are you crazy, man?"

"No," answered Tommy gravely, as he took his hands from my shoulders. "Not crazy yet, but fearful of what the future may bring. I will leave it entirely to you to get the contents of those chests away from here; all I ask of you is that you let me see nothing of it. I have always believed that every man had his price, if the bid were only high enough, and the sight of that chest made me feel that it was dangerously near my limit. You know the work which is before me; I must find Rounsival at all cost, but for a moment I was tempted to shirk. I must rely upon you to help me do my duty and not to let me be tempted from it by the sight of

that gold, I must try to forget that I have seen it until I set eyes on him."

"You've not long to wait, then!" I cried, starting back in terror. "Look!"

Clearly outlined as he stood erect upon the stone which had been his landmark, the moon shining full upon his face as he glared at us, was the huge figure of Rounsival, a mass of shaggy black hair falling over his forehead, his long arms waving wildly about in the air.

"Thirteen paces from this stone, in a line with the Cut-throat Spring!" he shouted. "Thirteen paces to eternal damnation! Thirteen paces to the bottomless pit of hell!"

We were so startled that we could not move for a moment, but Tommy quickly recovered himself and started toward him.

"Rounsival!" he called. "Rounsival! Come here!"

"Ronceville, Ronceville!" came as an echo, accompanied by derisive laughter from the lips of the Carolinian. "Another good man gone to hell fire and brimstone; and all for what lies thirteen paces from the Torture Rock, on a line with the Cut-throat Spring! Hornigold, Auger, Mansfelt, Ronceville; all of them gone to the devil who bought them with gold as red as blood!"

Tommy was gradually drawing closer to him, but Rounsival watched him sharply, and when he was within six feet, jumped from the stone and ran rapidly through the brush.

"In one week from to-night, come to me at the lookout, if you would be saved from hell fire and damnation!" he shouted back over his shoulder, but Tommy was running after him, shouting commands to stop and to awaken, while I followed close at his heels. It was a hopeless chase; Rounsival's long legs enabled him to outdistance us with ease, and after running for a mile over rough country we lost all trace of him.

"The man's as mad as a hatter," panted Tommy, as he leaned against a tree, utterly tired out. "He's still Blackbeard, safe enough; but Blackbeard demented. My power over him

appears to have vanished entirely, but he does not seem aggressive nor violent."

"Except that he pretty nearly frightened me to death," I answered, when I could find breath to speak. "Tommy, we can't find him to-night, and our nervous systems have had about enough. Let's get back to the ship and take up the search again to-morrow."

He gave silent assent, and we walked back in the moonlight, starting at every sound, and nervously peering into the bushes which lined the roadsides, looking for we knew not what.

V.

The next morning found me encamped upon the hilltop near the fort. We had talked it over, and decided that the bulk of the treasure was too great to be quickly removed, and that continued trips to the one spot would finally excite comment and cause investigation, so I brought a tent from the yacht and erected it over the treasure.

I boarded over the earth, arranging the tent-floor so that part of it could be easily lifted. I planned to open the chests at night, packing the contents in boxes that ostensibly contained my entomological specimens, which I could carry to the yacht during the day. That the weight of my alleged butterflies should not excite curiosity, I was obliged to carry them myself, for Tommy absolutely refused to take any part in the operations until he should have captured Rounsival.

My plan worked without a hitch, although, as I labored under the heavy boxes, I roundly abused Tommy that he had not cast me for the part of a geologist, so that I could have hired darkies to carry the supposed collections of stones; but when he laughingly offered to send to my aid a couple of hypnotized sailors, I immediately ceased complaining.

He carried on his search systematically, going from one end of the island to the other on horseback, searching the woods and the abandoned planta-

tion-houses and asking as many questions as he dared to in the scattered negro settlements.

The conditions on the island of New Providence, although it is small in extent, made it an ideal place for a fugitive to seek concealment. The whites, almost without exception, live in the city of Nassau, and the blacks in widely separated villages with rough country between.

The abolition of slavery practically meant the abandonment of agriculture, and the island is dotted with the old residences of the planters, long deserted and gradually falling into ruin in the midst of the scraggly growth which has obliterated any sign that the land was once under cultivation.

During the crusade for the suppression of the slave-trade many captured slavers were brought to Nassau, their cargoes were liberated, and the negroes, fresh from the wilds of Africa, formed colonies in the woods. Their descendants still live on the same ground; degenerate, ignorant savages, kept from absolute barbarism by the firm hand of the British law.

Tommy left it to me to watch the town, to keep in touch with the police, and gather such information as I could from the negroes who came from the outlying settlements to trade.

The officer in command of the constabulary was a good-natured young Englishman, knowing as much about police work as an English subaltern could be expected to know, which was nothing at all. He was an officer, not a policeman, but he turned out as smart a body of men as he could with the material at hand, and blessed his stars that he was assigned to a post where serious crime was practically unknown. In spite of Tommy's injunctions, I should have been tempted to confide our difficulties to him, but I realized that, except in an actual encounter, he would be of no practical help to us.

I gained absolutely no information in the town, but after a couple of days it seemed to me that the negroes from the south and west of the island avoided me. Their broken English was almost

unintelligible in any case, but if a group of them were gossiping together, its members became suddenly silent when I approached, although their talk was animated enough when I passed on.

I mentioned this to Tommy, who was getting discouraged with his fruitless search, and he questioned me eagerly about it.

"I have felt the same thing myself in the villages," he said, when I told him what little I knew. "The confounded darkies seem to have grown suddenly suspicious of me, and I can't get the slightest information of Rounsival from them, although to-day I was convinced that several whom I questioned knew something of his whereabouts. They shut up like clams, or took refuge behind their stupidity and the unintelligible jargon which they speak. I don't like the looks of it, and I would give a good deal to see the West India squadron sail into the harbor."

"Great Scott, Tommy! do you want the whole English navy to help you catch Rounsival?" I exclaimed. "What have they got to do with it?"

"The navy had a great deal to do with the restoration of order here once, and its presence may be necessary again," he replied seriously, but I laughed at him.

"Do you expect the reincarnation of Blackbeard to wipe out the colony single-handed?" I asked incredulously.

"No, but did it ever occur to you that Teach was no fool, and that he was a born leader of men?" replied Tommy, with a gesture of impatience. "You know that I explained the present situation to Rounsival that night on the hill when I commanded him to become Blackbeard, and the very fact that we have heard of no atrocity which he has committed, while it is a great relief to me, makes me suspicious of what he is up to. If Rounsival is really Blackbeard for the moment—and the fidelity with which he has played the part gives us no reason to doubt it—if he has the cunning, and reasons with the brain, of the old buccaneer, he will see the futility of committing crimes single-handed, which would profit him not at

all. But Blackbeard alone, and Blackbeard at the head of a band of followers, even if composed of ignorant negroes, are two entirely different propositions."

"And you think he is recruiting a company of black buccaneers to replace his old followers!" I exclaimed derisively. "Come, Tommy, wake up; this is the twentieth century."

"Ah, but Blackbeard does not know that—he is two hundred years behind the times. He knows nothing of the cable, of steam navigation, of modern artillery, and the hundred and one innovations which have made piracy an impossibility. He remembers only the old days, when a brave man, if he possessed the genius of leadership, could gather a horde of desperate followers and carve out their fortunes with their swords."

"And you think this colony in danger from any following he might gather—half-savage negroes, without discipline or arms?" I said, smiling at the fantastic idea.

"What discipline had the buccaneers, who regarded every member of the Free Company as equal except when at sea? And what arms did they depend upon?" asked Tommy scornfully. "Morgan's men took the fortified cities of the Isthmus with only their cutlasses, and nearly all of their victories were won by hand-to-hand fighting."

"Yes, but these blacks haven't even cutlasses, and the whole thing is too ridiculous to discuss seriously," I said, a trifle wearily, for it seemed to me that Tommy was adding needless worry to the weight of anxiety under which we already staggered; but he was in deadly earnest.

"You laugh at me for wishing the war-ships here, but you have no conception of what a negro insurrection would mean," he said earnestly. "Remember, that the blacks in the outlying settlements are only a degree above the barbarism of their African ancestors. They are of the race which revolted in Haiti, marching from the mountains, armed only with scythes and machetes, the impaled body of a white infant for

their banner, and put every white inhabitant to death with frightful tortures. It is the race which, under Tousseint Louverture, a man as black as the ace of spades, defied the veteran troops of Napoleon, thirty thousand of whom perished in the attempt to subdue the island. The ignorant negroes of this island, under the command of a man like Blackbeard, would in twenty-four hours make this properous colony a howling wilderness. Remember, that by my tomfoolery I made the work easy for him, for there is not a negro on the island who does not believe that Rounsival is a powerful voodoo worker."

I had forgotten that, but when he reminded me of it I shared his fears. That would give him his first hold upon them; and if, as Tommy suggested, it was the brain of Blackbeard which was at work, he would not be slow to take advantage of it. The whole theory seemed so monstrous that I could not believe it, but my incredulity had received so many shocks since I first watched Tommy's dabbling with hypnotism, that I was no longer sure that anything was impossible.

"Great Scott, Tommy! if there is the slightest chance that you are right, it is criminal of us to delay a moment in giving warning. Let's go on shore now and give the inspector a tip."

"And get laughed at as lunatics!" he replied bitterly. "Remember, they regard the bug-hunter and artist as irresponsible now, and if we went to them with such a fantastic tale they would clap us into a madhouse."

"Is there a single thing which we did in our foolishness which does not come back on us now?" I groaned, for every minute the arguments which Tommy had advanced seemed more convincing, and I had visions of Nassau in flames, the gutters of Bay Street running blood, and Rounsival, in the character of Blackbeard, presiding in fiendish glee over a Saturnalia of murder, rapine, and torture, which would make the wildest scenes the old buccaneer capital had ever witnessed sink into insignificance.

It could not have been a quiet and

orderly resort in the olden days, judging from the ancient chronicles and the graphic descriptions of debauchery and cruelty which Rounsival gave in the hypnotic trance as celebrating the arrival of a captured ship, but the riot had been among themselves, and only a handful of wretched prisoners were subjected to their violence. Even the names of places which Rounsival had mentioned the last night we saw him—"Torture Rock" and "Cut-throat Spring"—savored of cruelty and violence; and as the full extent of our helplessness dawned upon me, I meekly asked Tommy if he had anything to suggest.

"Only this, that we keep our mouths shut and our eyes and ears open," he answered. "I shall be about the back country as much as possible, and keep track of any unusual movement among the negroes in the settlements, and you must watch those who come into the town, to see if there is any purchasing of arms or suspicious talk and boasting from individuals. The English have always had the possibility of a rising in mind, but they took the troops away when the cable was laid, believing that they would receive ample warning of any trouble. But we know that if this comes off, the tactics of the buccaneers, who depended upon secrecy and surprise, will be followed. If this thing is in the air, and we can't prevent it, the fleet might get here in time to string up poor, deluded Rounsival, but there wouldn't be a white man alive to bear witness against him."

"Great Scott, Tommy! you draw pleasant pictures!" I said with a shudder. "How long do you count that it will take him to organize his force, if that is what he is up to?"

"I can't tell that, but he'll not waste any time," he answered thoughtfully. "This is the third night since we have seen him, and he gave us an appointment at 'The Lookout,' wherever that may be, in a week. He can certainly do nothing inside of three or four days. How is your work coming on?"

This was the first reference he had made to the treasure since the night

we discovered it; he had even refused to listen to me when I told him of it, and his abrupt question surprised me.

"Fine," I answered enthusiastically, for in spite of all our troubles I had not neglected the work. "Three days more will finish it, if my back and legs hold out, and you should see the contents of that second chest. The first one looked good enough, but——"

"Don't!" he interrupted me sharply. "I am not asking for details. Give what time you can to it, but don't neglect the information department. Find out, if you can, if there is any place known as 'The Lookout.'"

VI.

The doctors claim that hard work alone never kills a man, but that if it is combined with worry it breaks him down and makes him old before his time. If there is anything to that theory, Tommy Williams and I certainly lived ten years of our allotted span within the next four days.

He was off long before daylight, returning late at night, spending a good eighteen hours out of each twenty-four in the saddle, while I toiled early and late at the treasure, and spent the intervening time in the town, playing the spy and eavesdropper on the negroes.

In spite of all my anxiety, the work at the treasure was fascinating, for the second chest was far more interesting than the first. It contained a miscellaneous assortment of booty, bags of unset precious stones, priceless jewelry of beautiful workmanship, and engraved and chased flagons and altar vessels of massive gold.

I could not form even an approximate estimate of the value of the things, but it seemed incredible that one man should have accumulated in a short career such a hoard, notwithstanding that he had worked the richest field the world has ever known—the Spanish Main in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

From information which has come to me since—and which in good time I

shall try to verify—I have reason to believe that the greater part of it was gathered by one of Blackbeard's predecessors, and that he appropriated it by the foulest act of treachery of his career.

One most interesting feature was the proof that Tommy's theory was correct, for in the bottom of the pit, under the chests, I found the rotted remains of the rawhide bags which had held the quicksilver, and even a small quantity of the loose metal. The bulk of it had escaped through a crevice in the rocks, to be found nearly a hundred years later, and after yet a hundred years to furnish the clue which led to the discovery of the treasure.

And as Tommy's theory in regard to the treasure had proved true in every detail, so I feared would his theory as to Rounsival's actions. The negroes who came in from the settlements, balancing on their woolly heads huge bundles of firewood or baskets of fruit, vegetables, and eggs, to barter in the market-place, were evidently laboring under great excitement, and they held long confabs with the city negroes, gesticulating and arguing; but not once was I able to overhear them, for a silence always fell upon the group when I approached.

I made it my business to loiter about the shops and watch their purchases, but I saw no barter for arms or ammunition. I asked one of the shopkeepers if they ever bought such things, but he laughed as he pointed to a cheap rifle in the window and assured me that the combined cash capital of any of the settlements would be insufficient to pay for it. Tommy shook his head when I reported this as a hopeful sign while we were eating our late dinner on the yacht.

"I know that they lead a hand-to-mouth existence, and rarely see a sixpence in real money," he said. "The purchase of expensive arms is out of the question, but surprise and sheer weight of numbers will do the trick, if that is what they are up to, for you know what a small proportion of the population is white. I am not sure yet, but

something is up, and your observations in the city simply confirm mine in the country. The settlements are humming like disturbed beehives with excitement, but not an atom of information as to the cause of it can I gather. The blacks are suspicious of me and avoid me, and if I do succeed in cornering one, I have only my labor for my pains."

VII.

The last of the treasure was safely aboard the yacht—a more precious cargo than any boat of its size had ever carried—and after throwing the dirt back on the rifled chests, empty save for the bones of the murdered slaves which I placed in them, I struck my tent and moved back on board.

It was the seventh day since we had seen Rounsival, and the one on which he had given us an appointment, but neither of us had been able to locate any place which was known as "The Look-out."

Excitement and uneasiness among the negroes had steadily increased, and all through the night, which I had spent in making repeated trips between the hilltop and the yacht, I had heard the monotonous beating of a tom-tom in the village of Grant's Town, which adjoins Nassau.

I spoke of it to Tommy at our early breakfast, and he smiled grimly as he showed me the butts of two revolvers which he carried in holsters at his belt, his coat hiding them from view.

"I believe things are about ripe," he said seriously. "The pot was boiling hard yesterday, and I think you had better go armed, too. Be around the square, where I can find you to-day, and keep track of the inspector. I am off to the country again."

My hands shook as I loaded my pistols and thought what a horrible position we were in. We would be jeered at if we gave a warning, and it might actually lead to our incarceration as lunatics if we insisted, and I knew that in our liberty lay the sole hope of the threatened colony.

I was heartsick as I walked down Bay Street, passing pretty young girls in their light-colored dresses, laughing and talking together in ignorance of the terrible fate which hovered over them.

The shopkeepers and other whites were complaining about the unreliability of their black employees, who had knocked off work for the day, on the plea that they were going to a religious meeting; and as I saw the inspector line up the relief for the day shift, and carefully inspect their speckless uniforms, I wondered how long he and his handful of men could hold off a swarm of the back-country negroes, led by Blackbeard and assisted by their brethren of the city.

The result of my figuring was not satisfactory, and I was strongly tempted to forge the governor's name to a cablegram urging the fleet to come under forced draft to the Bahamas.

Late in the forenoon I noticed a steady procession of negroes moving to the east end of the town and out into the open country beyond, and my anxiety became almost intolerable as I nervously fingered the butts of the revolvers under my coat and wondered how many I could shoot before I went down.

I longed to see Tommy, and, as if in answer to my wish, he rode into the square, his clothes covered with dust and his horse in a lather.

He dismounted when he saw me, and beckoned to me to come to an open space where he could not be overheard.

"It's coming, sure enough," he said earnestly, in a low voice. "I don't know what is up, but the whole negro population—men, women, and children—is marching toward the east end of the island. This horse is about done up, for I have ridden the last ten miles at a gallop; but get a couple of fresh ones, the best in the city, and we'll follow the crowd. When we find out the true inwardness of this thing, one of us can gallop back and give the alarm if there is danger."

"Why not both?" I asked, as I guessed the part he intended to play.

"One of us will try to control Rounsi-

val, and, if our guess is correct, there will be but one to return if he is beyond influencing," he answered slowly, and with a heavy heart I went to get the horses.

Tommy was talking with the inspector when I returned, but he quickly excused himself and mounted the horse which I led beside my own.

"He's playing lawn-tennis at the rectory this afternoon and dining at the Government House to-night," said Tommy, as we galloped off. "Remember that if you want to find him in a hurry."

We cut across the island from north to south, and, as Tommy had said, the whole negro population of the settlements seemed to be on the march eastward. Arrayed in their best finery, they straggled along the dusty roads, greeting us civilly as we passed them, but giving evasive answers when we asked them where they were going. Finally, on a small path bordered by thick brush, Tommy espied a young negro about seventeen years of age trudging along by himself.

"I know that delegate to the convention," he said, glancing around to see that there was no one else in sight. "He was particularly sassy to me in Congo Town a couple of days ago, and I think I'll teach him a lesson."

He jumped from his horse, throwing the reins to me, and without word of warning caught the astonished negro by the collar of his ragged coat and dragged him into the bushes. I followed him, leading the horses until we were far enough from the road to be safe from observation, then Tommy stopped and raised his heavy riding-whip threateningly.

"Now, my dark-complected friend, the last time I saw you, you were impudent and refused to answer a civil question," he said. "I have a remedy for that here, and if you don't tell me what I want to know I'll lash every square inch of skin from your body. In the first place, where are you and all the others going?"

The frightened boy was whimpering, but he answered Tommy's ques-

tions quickly enough. He was going to a great religious meeting at the old ruined tower about a mile to the east of us, and for a week word had been passed around among the negroes that there would be remarkable doings. They had been warned to let no hint of it come to the "buckra," and he didn't want to go himself, but he was constrained by the fear that his limbs would shrivel up if he didn't.

It was a queer jumble of voodooism, revival cant, and superstition which he mumbled; and when he had explained the situation as well as he could, Tommy looked at me in astonishment.

"I can't make head nor tail of this!" he exclaimed. "Who is making you go, boy?"

The negro hesitated for a moment, but a nervous trembling of the whip caught his eye and loosened his tongue.

"I dunno he' name," he protested. "Teacher, he call he'self. He no brack trash; he real buckra, laik yo' gem'men."

"What does he look like?" asked Tommy eagerly.

"He berry big man; big laik a ji'nt." The negro raised his hand far above his own head to indicate the height. "An' strong! I 'clare ter goodness, he strong laik a hoss. Las' night he mighty near bruk a big nigger in two, 'case he say he not go ter-night. Buckra he say any brack man no come he bu'n in hell fiah, an' hit's mo' bettah he nevah been bo'n. All dem dat come he lead 'em out ob de wilde'ness."

"That will be about all from you, my friend," said Tommy, drawing a pistol and pointing it at the negro's head. "I don't know about the hell fire part of it, but if you don't go back to Congo Town as fast as your legs can carry you, and not speak to a soul before tomorrow morning, I'll blow the top of your head off."

The negro turned gray with terror, and swore by voodoo and everything else he could think of that he would obey, and he was already on the way when we mounted and returned to the road.

"I know the place—they call it

Blackbeard's Tower, and we'll attend the meeting. It's Rounsival, of course. Teach is the name he has adopted. I told you that the old devil's brain was working this thing, and now I see it all. He's worked on their fears with a mixture of voodooism and religion, and when he gets 'em together they'll be in such an emotional state that he can mold them like clay. A word from him and they will follow him as the crusaders did Peter the Hermit."

We secreted our horses in the bushes, and drew as close as we dared to the tower. Hundreds of negroes were about the place, and they were still coming from all directions.

As the sun dipped under the horizon, leaving the black darkness which comes so quickly in the tropics, two great bonfires of dry bush blazed up, making the place as bright as day and casting a weird light on the faces of the jabbering darkies.

Suddenly a profound silence fell over them, and Tommy grasped my arm as, on the top of the tower, every feature plainly visible in the bright light of the fires, stood the man we sought.

It was the face of Blackbeard, but softened and lacking the ferocity which had always been there when Rounsival acted the part in the hypnotic trance; and the change was so marked that when Tommy started to go forward I restrained him, and a sudden silence fell over the assemblage when Rounsival raised his hand, as if in benediction.

For more than an hour we lay there in the brush, listening to the man.

Simply and graphically he told of his crimes; not boasting, as he had done to us, but remorsefully and penitently.

The recital of crime and profession of repentance was followed by a passionate appeal to his hearers to confess their sins and seek forgiveness, as he had done; and I recognized that it was now Rounsival, the Carolinian, familiar with the negro revivals of the black belt, who was speaking.

His spell was over them, and under his exhortation the negroes were swaying back and forth in unison, while

shouts of "Hallelujah! Amen! Glory be!" and all the cries of the Southern meetings went up from all sides.

With a final appeal he requested all those who were penitent and wished forgiveness to come forward. Tommy and I took advantage of the general movement of the hysterical darkies to edge through the crowd, and after a deal of pushing gained the tower.

The exalted negroes were too much occupied with their own salvation to notice us, and we passed into the ruined building and waited for the Carolinian to come down. Tommy, the load of anxiety lifted, was like his old self; alert and ready, and when Rounsival reached the ground he stood before him and made rapid passes over his face.

"Forget it, Rounsival!" he said sharply. "You are not Teach, not Blackbeard, not a pirate, but Ralph Rounsival, asleep, and absolutely in my power. Sleep, Rounsival! Sleep until I tell you to awaken!"

The face slowly changed, again the Southerner stood before us with his eyes closed, as natural as life, except for a week's growth of beard, and Tommy breathed a sigh of relief.

I have only a confused recollection of reaching the yacht. I seem to remember running along the white road with Rounsival, still asleep, between Tommy and me, and I think I heard the chug-chug of the auxiliary and the hoisting of sails; but the first thing which is distinct is the memory of Tommy standing beside my bunk and holding out a glass of champagne, while the yacht tumbled about in a rough sea. A burst of profanity from Rounsival, who was in the throes of seasickness in the next cabin, came to my ears, and I took the glass and drank.

"Tommy, you gave the soul of Blackbeard a chance to escape from purgatory and make a vicarious confession of his sins; and from the language which his last lineal descendant is using, I judge that he is in need of your spiritual attention."

And Mr. Thomas Williams laughed for the first time in ten days.

The Other Man

By Martin G. Flavin

From the days of the primitive man's dugout to those of the huge modern ocean greyhound, those who have gone "down to the sea in ships" have had strange experiences. One of the strangest of these experiences forms the basis of Mr. Flavin's very original and well told narrative

(A Complete Story)

CHAPTER I.



SURGE after surge after surge, each one curled over my head, broke, strangled me, beat me, and, carrying me for an instant on its crest, dropped me down into the depths, only to be again smothered in the next. Good God! would it never cease? If they would just stop for a moment, just long enough to let me draw one deep, life-giving breath out of the night. Bah! another one, salty, nauseating. Well, well, it was almost over. My courage was gone, my strength was going; and before, behind, on either side, stretched black, relentless miles of rolling sea.

How long had it been since the schooner sank—days, weeks, months, or only minutes? I neither knew nor cared. It was night when the unfortunate craft had carried me down into the vortex of the sea, and it was night now, still night. There had been no warning, no intimation of the end: a crash, a scream, the swirling rush of waters—that was all. Now the end was very near. I had fought my fight and I was drowning.

A great, black, shapeless thing, blacker than the night, loomed up beside me, struck me, and, hurling me away, sucked me back to roll me madly against itself.

I had no thought of what the thing could be, because my eyes were fixed upon a twitching, dancing line of swift-

ly coming white. There was death in it, and I was helpless.

On it rushed, dragging me from the bruising wall into the trough, so that I looked up miles into the sky and saw only the dainty lacework of my shroud. Good-by, old world, old sea!

Now it tangled itself about my throat, choked me, beat me, and, wrapping me tight, hurled me out, out. I was hammered against something hard; something which cut and tore into my side, but to which, even in my drowning condition, my hands clinched and held.

The wave went back, jerking me until my arms seemed to be no longer a part of myself, but rather senseless things which I gripped. At last, one mighty tug; it was gone, and I rolled over a narrow thing which even in the suffocation of mind and body I knew to be a vessel's rail.

For a time I lay where I had fallen, lashed by the spray and rolled backward and forward by the half-spent billows.

Why did no one come to my aid? was the thought which first printed itself upon my consciousness when strength and reason began slowly to struggle back. Where was the watch? Where were the lights? I wondered vaguely and found no answer in my memory.

I rose weakly on my hands and knees, and crawled slowly along the slanting deck, but whether forward or aft I had no notion. With every step I took, the fury of the sea seemed to increase. This was unaccountable until suddenly I realized that although the solid deck

was still beneath my feet the water was constantly above my knees.

Terrified, I turned about and made my way in the opposite direction, with the result that I ran full tilt into the broken, jagged stump of a mast.

I sat down limply on the swimming deck and tried to think. Here was a ship sans lights, crew, or masts, and the sea washing deep over one end of her. What was the explanation? Where could—

The question was never finished. Before the words had time to form themselves upon my lips the answer came and stunned me with its horror. No lights were burning because there were no lights; no watch trod the storm-swept deck because there was no watch; the splintered mast and buried stern told their own tale: the ship was an abandoned wreck.

And here was I cast up from the sea to be preserved for the tortures of thirst and starvation. Better a thousand times have been drowned and done with it than to have found safety here, hopeless, helpless, alone, on this God-forsaken leper of the deep.

I leaned back against the shattered spar and, as the full realization of my predicament burst upon me, gave myself up to utter despair. Chilled with the cold, half dead from exposure and exhaustion, what chances of safety remained to me here on this dismantled ship? Not one. Doomed I was as surely as night follows day, and doomed alone.

So I sat there listlessly until the numbness in my feet and hands warned me that unless I found some means of restoring warmth to my frozen blood I would never leave that spot alive.

Then the instinct of self-preservation rushing into my heart brought with it new strength and courage. To be sure, the wreck might sink that night; but on the contrary it might float for days or months. The hurricane might last a week, or it might die with the sunrise. In the meantime I might perish of thirst or starvation; but what reason had I to assume that there were not food and water in plenty on board?

Thus arguing with myself, I set to exploring the deck. Without much difficulty excepting that attendant upon keeping right side up, I found a scuttle and, crawling half-way around it, located the open hatch.

So far so good, but I hesitated. The air that came up from the pit was stifling and reeking with a pungent odor which at the time I could not classify. It was an unpleasant prospect at the best, but I must come to it sooner or later, and postponing the ordeal could not be depended upon to increase its attraction; therefore— I laughed at my fears, and throwing a leg over the coping, commenced the descent.

At the foot of the ladder I paused and, remembering that I had a waterproof match-case in my pocket, extracted one, found it dry, and, steadying myself against the hatch-rail, struck a light. However, I was standing directly under the open scuttle, and the draft from above extinguished the flame before I had time to look about me.

I lit another, with the same result. Then, wishing to be frugal of my slender stock, I released my hold on the railing in order to use my left hand for a shield. Just as I did so, a heavy sea listed the ship violently to port, and I was forced to step out blindly to save myself a fall.

My foot came down on something which sent me reeling back against the ladder with my heart in my mouth and a limp, lifeless feeling in my knees.

If ever a man's hair stood on end, mine did then. I wanted to scream, but I couldn't. I couldn't even move.

That thing which I had touched was human. It had not stirred nor uttered a sound, nor in that instant of contact could I have distinguished a form; yet instinctively I knew, and the uncanny terror of it drove reason from my brain:

How long I crouched there in the darkness I cannot say; it may have been one minute, perhaps longer. It seemed years.

At length, when I had reached a place where I felt I could not endure the horror for another instant, I was re-

called to my senses by a low, piteous moan. It was a man.

Well, I had known that all the time, but somehow the sound steadied me. The moan indicated pain; the man was sick, perhaps dying. It was childish and unnatural to be quaking there in the corner when by a little exertion I might be able to save a life. I was a fool.

Swallowing an obstructing lump in my throat, I called: "Hello, there!"

I strained my ears. No response. Perhaps the poor fellow was beyond speech. The sound of my own voice cheered me, and, standing out from the ladder, I struck a match. It was damp, but before it died I discerned a dark, huddled object on the floor, and to my great relief close beside me on a table a candlestick.

I struck another light, with better success, and, after several ineffectual attempts—for, like everything else on the ship, it was wet and moldy—got the candle to burn in a flickering, uncertain sort of way, and holding it high above my head, made some effort to pierce the darkness.

The scene which I beheld was one of unutterable confusion. Tables, stools, sea-chests, bedding, and broken crockery were piled about in salty, sodden heaps where the pitch of the ship had thrown them.

From the general appearance of the place I concluded that it was the after-cabin, and, further, that whatever the direct cause of abandonment might have been, there had been little delay in departure.

As for obtaining warmth and dry clothing, that illusion was shattered by my first glance. The water was everywhere. It ran down the bulkheads, dripped from the beams, and with every roll of the ship quite a little wave washed back and forth across the floor, sweeping along in its course a miscellaneous collection of cooking utensils and bric-à-brac.

There was nothing in sight to hold or even to attract the attention save the figure on the floor, and to this, after a hasty survey of the surroundings, I turned my attention.

The body was that of a man—a sailor, I judged, from the coarse canvas trousers and blue shirt in which he was clad. He lay face down on a mattress, with one arm doubled under him and the other thrown back above his head.

I knelt and took his hand in mine. It was limp, but the pulse was beating; at least he was not dead.

I was casting about for some means to revive him, when my eyes fell upon a bottle at his side. I picked it up and found it to be half full of brandy.

Instantly I recognized the odor as the one which had assailed my nostrils when I first entered the cabin. Then a suspicion flashed through my mind, and I bent closer to the prostrate form. Having done which, I rose to my feet, my compassion transformed into repugnance, and my pity into disgust. Sick—dying? Nonsense. The man was drunk—dead drunk.

Why bother with such a whelp? I turned away and started for the ladder, intending to continue my explorations; but as I put my foot on the bottom rung preparatory to commencing the ascent I was suddenly seized with an overwhelming curiosity to see the man's face. With a smile at my own folly, I retraced my steps, and, laying hold of the sleeper's shoulders, rolled him over on his back.

Then I did a very strange thing. I walked to the ladder, sat down with my back against it, and laughed and laughed and laughed. And if there was little mirth in my laughter, there was still less in my heart.

Except in pictures, I had never seen the face before. But I knew it, all right; knew it for all its dirt and stubbly beard. I had been hunting it for many a weary month, and now, after all my fruitless wandering, to be cast up by the sea into its presence! It was wonderful, and it was dull.

Surely the gods choose their own peculiar times and places; that they chose at all was quite enough. What difference did it make now whether we sank or swam? What difference did anything make now? Just one hour of life was all I asked. Then I would be

ready to meet my fate; my mission would be ended.

Not particularly cheerful reflections, think you? But I laughed. Aye, with the storm howling in my ears and destruction staring me in the face, I sat among the wreckage on the water-soaked floor and laughed till the tears ran down my cheeks.

CHAPTER II.

After a while the laugh went out of me quite as suddenly and inexplicably as it had come. I got up and, perceiving a stool among the litter at my feet, sat down upon it and stared grimly at the man. There was a belt about his waist and—yes, something in it. I stooped over and extracted a revolver.

Again the hideous humor of the thing conquered, and I laughed as I placed the weapon in my pocket. Then, calmly enough, I set to studying the face by the dim light of the candle.

It was a cold, sneering face, and even in its dirt and misery handsome. I found myself wondering how it would look if I should grind my heel into it. Would it bleed much? Would it hurt him? But could anything hurt him as he had hurt me?

Then a great wave of loathing flooded into me, and I kicked savagely at the prostrate form. This act gave vent to my passion, but the cowardice of it appalled me. I jerked away from him with a curse at my own brutality and began feverishly to search the cabin.

Turning quickly to the bunks, I ransacked them with the avidity of a wrecker; but I might have saved myself the trouble—they were empty.

Then I set upon the heaps of wreckage on the deck, digging into them with my hands like a wild animal: blankets, clothing, broken dishes, the refuse from a half-eaten meal—wet and moldy. Nothing to catch the eye or hold the fancy.

I turned back to the man. My patience was wearing out, and it was time he woke. But how to rouse him?

Then I remembered that I had seen a bucket somewhere. I found it at

last, and, filling it with salt water—no difficult feat, I promise you—poured the contents, a little at a time, into his eyes and nose.

Ah! that fetched him. He strangled and threw out his arms wildly. Grabbing him by the shoulders, I shook him back and forth, at the same time screaming in his ear: "Wake up! Wake up!"

My exertions produced only a groan and a slight movement of the legs. Again I shook him—shook him into a sitting posture, and propped a stool behind his back.

"Come, come," I yelled. "Brace up, man. Pull yourself together."

The eyes opened a trifle, just far enough to show a narrow slit of white. He was waking. I let him be a moment and listened to the gale. To my surprise, the shriek of the wind was less piercing, the roll of the ship less violent. The fury of the sea had moderated. There was time, quantities of time, for all I had to say and do; and afterward—who cared? I turned back to the man with a great joy in my heart.

The eyes were widening now, bleary and dull with drink, but still eyes that could see and understand. I braced his arms against the deck and saw them stiffen with life and muscle. I released my hold, and the body, swaying for an instant uncertainly, regained its poise, straightened, and sat still. The man was awake and staring.

I pushed the candle forward upon the table so that the light fell full on his face; then I retreated into the shadows. It was a useless enough precaution, inasmuch as he had never seen me; but I was in no mind to face him until his memory cleared and he could comprehend what I had planned to say. In the meantime it would be interesting to watch his actions.

He sat stupidly in the wet, staring fixedly before him, with the water dripping from his matted hair across his dirty, grisly face.

There was no expression in the eyes, and no motion in the haggard face, save when he licked his tongue across his lip or spat the brine from his mouth.

He presented, doubtless, an appearance calculated to arouse pity in any but the hardest of hearts. Unfortunately for him, mine was of adamant, and the only sensation awakened in my breast was disgust. Also, there was something in the look and posture which kindled again my smoldering sense of humor. Brutally, perhaps, but, under the circumstances, naturally, I laughed.

The head turned heavily toward me at the sound, and the eyes groped in the shadows for its cause; but I sank still farther back into the darkness.

"Who's there?" he muttered thickly.

A simple question, had I been of a mind to tell him. But to tell him now would spoil the play; besides, I was not ready. So in reply I merely chuckled to myself.

"Who are you?" he cried petulantly. "I don't know you. Where is the crew?"

Good Lord! was it possible he did not know? Could he have been drunk from the first? But when was the first? It might have been days before or only hours.

That theory clearly explained the facts, and I marveled that I had not thought it out before. He had been drunk when the storm struck, drunk through it all, and drunk they had abandoned or overlooked him when the end came.

And now this man who had gone to sleep on a stanch little ship teeming with life and bustle, perhaps with the bright blue sky over his head, and surely with friends, or, at least companions in plenty all about him—this man was waking up on a sinking derelict, in the grasp of a hurricane; cold, wet, and utterly alone save for the presence of one whose life was consecrated to his destruction.

Of all the tricks that fate had ever played him, I doubt not that that one was the meanest, and the man did not know! There was the rub, for him; for me the joke. It was a good one, and I laughed. Crew?

"There is no crew," I said for lack of any better answer.

My words seemed to convey no meaning to his mind, and he sat quite still, looking vacantly about him.

Presently his blank, listless gaze fell upon the littered deck and went no farther. There was something unusual about it. He could not make out just what, and his brow creased with the effort.

Then I saw him touch his wringing clothes and shake his head dubiously. It was no use, and at length he gave it up.

"How came this water here?" he asked.

"Listen," I said sharply. "Do you hear the roar of the sea and the howl of the wind? Do you feel the roll of the ship? Do you see the piles of wreckage in front of you and the empty bunks? Do you smell the salt in everything and taste it, too? And then, do you ask how came the water here? How should I know? Perhaps through the hatch, perhaps through her bottom. Gather your wits, you fool."

Apparently he took no offense at my words, which were certainly harsh enough to have roused his resentment; and I don't think he heard them with any degree of comprehension, for he still sat with vacant eye, evidently struggling to piece the old scene with the new.

There was a blank somewhere, a misdeal. He shuffled the cards and dealt again in a vain attempt to unravel the mystery. A page was missing from his memory book, and it was the one page which he cared to read. What could have happened? Or, rather, what had happened?

His thoughts were written in his face and in the nervous twitching of his hands. Then at last the light broke on him, and before he spoke I saw it in the wide-open, terrified eyes and blanching cheek.

"Not a wreck," he whispered. "No—no; they wouldn't do that. They wouldn't leave me here to drown. There wasn't a cloud in the sky when I went to sleep this morning—yesterday—oh! I don't know when. I had been drinking, I remember. But they wouldn't

leave me here to die like a rat in a trap; I know they wouldn't."

"Look about you," I said dryly.

He looked, and the terror deepened in his face.

"It can't be, it can't be," he muttered. "But where are they?" Then suddenly he turned on me. "Who are you?" he cried. "If the ship's abandoned, how came you here? Why do you stand there skulking in the dark? Come out! Come out, I say!"

He dragged himself to his feet and went on piteously: "If this is a joke it's gone far enough."

Joke? It was a better joke than he could conjure in his wildest imagination, and I laughed in the shadow.

"There's nothing to laugh at," he cried; and pleaded like a frightened child: "Tell me who you are and where you came from. Come into the light, man; come!"

It would be as well to humor him, I thought, and in the end there would be no difference; so I strode out from the darkness and stood before him for the first time, man to man.

He stared at me foolishly and started back with an oath.

"Who are you?" he screamed. "I don't know you. In God's name, how came you here?" There was horror in his face, and mad, unreasoning panic in his legs.

"Pull up," I answered shortly. "I'm neither ghost nor devil, and as for coming here——" Then I told him.

There was no passion in me while I spoke, and, in fact, I was amazed at my calmness and perfect self-possession.

I can account for it in no other way than by the fact that, having set myself a task to perform—a ghastly one, I own—and, having dreamed of its completion as the object of my existence, fancying a series of blood-curdling incidents in connection with it, I now found the reality so far short of the ideal in point of tragedy that I was immensely relieved.

At any rate, whatever the cause, I have never been more completely master

of myself than I was while I stood there looking into his eyes.

The man heard me out in silence, merely nodding now and then to show that he understood, and his jaw dropped with surprise.

"Lord!" he gasped, when I had done. "What a tale! If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, I'd say it was a lie. Talk about luck! Well, you win the prize, and I guess some of it's mine, too, because if I had waked up and found myself alone——" He whistled softly and left the balance of his thought unsaid.

The fear had gone out of him, at least the fear of me, for I was now explainable; but the fear of the wreck and death still held.

"What kind of a show have we got?" he asked at length with trepidation in his voice. "Will she hold, do you think?"

"That depends on several things," I replied. "For instance, what is the cargo?"

"Lumber, I think," he answered absently. "I'm sure I don't know."

"A sailor, and don't know his cargo!" I exclaimed. "Come, that's pretty thin."

"But I'm not a sailor," he said coldly, "and I don't know. What difference does it make?" he added.

"It makes just this difference," I answered dryly, "if it is lumber, she may float for days; otherwise——" I shrugged my shoulders.

He puzzled for a minute in silence, and then remembered that it was lumber. "Trimmed lumber." There was no mistake about it; he had heard them say so.

"Faith!" he said gayly, "things might be worse. To-morrow it will clear, and we'll be picked up, none the worse for our scare. Don't you think so?"

It was my cue, and I agreed with him. He seemed to consider my assurance as final, for his spirits went up several degrees and the color flared back into his cheeks. Poor fool! I laughed to myself and wondered what he would say if he knew.

In the meantime his eyes had fallen

on the brandy bottle, and it had been resurrected for a purpose.

"We are both cold and both wet," he said apologetically, seating himself beside the table. "What say you to a little nip?"

I said "Yes" heartily, and put the proffered bottle to my lips. I was cold and wet, and there was warmth in the bottle and strength as well—strength which I might stand in need of before the end. Also the liquor played a prominent part in my calculations, and since it would make no difference I could afford to humor him.

Taking a good, strong drink, I passed it back to him and watched with fiendish delight a long inch of its contents vanish.

"There is tobacco," he invited, drawing a rubber pouch from his pocket. "Have you a pipe?"

I had, and filled it. We lit together at the candle, and my hand was perilously near his windpipe—so near that it jerked and wasted half my smoke.

By this time the brandy had warmed my blood and infused me with new life. But I was again surprised to find that there was no evidence of frenzy in my carefully laid plans, and that I felt no stronger sensations in my breast than those which might be properly ascribed to a common hangman.

I presume that my hatred for the man through so many months had become too mechanical to permit of any intense passion. At any rate, I experienced none, and I cannot better describe my state of mind than to say, as I have said once before, that I was immensely relieved.

I was awakened from my reverie by a second invitation to drink, and though I cheerfully held the thing to my lips, yet I took not one drop. Afterward I watched another inch of golden fire flow into his veins to loosen up his tongue and steal away his judgment.

For a time I let him drink and smoke, laughing the while at his jokes, and now and then telling a racy anecdote myself to keep things moving. In short, I put him at his ease, melted his reserve, and gained his confidence.

God! what it cost me to do it no one can ever know; but the game was worth the playing, and I played it.

Finally, when the time seemed ripe, I led the conversation whither I wished it to go, and he took the bait readily, as I had known he would.

"I could tell you a story, a true one, such as——" he broke off abruptly and looked at me craftily.

"I'll wager you could," I leered at him drunkenly, and banged my fist upon the table. "Dammé!" I roared. "We can't all be angels, and I was never cut out for one, but if you're afraid to tell the tale, why keep it; that's all."

I fear it was rather an incoherent burst of rhetoric, but it served the purpose.

"Why not?" he mused. "I need name no names, and, anyway, you're a good fellow. Well, I'll tell you what I've never breathed before. Take it for what it's worth."

He took an introductory pull at the bottle—to clear his throat, he said—and I leaned back among the shadows where I could watch his face and still remain unseen.

CHAPTER III.

"I'm a gentleman," he began with mock solemnity; "and the only son of well-to-do but honest parents." He paused for me to laugh, and I did so, whereupon he joined in boisterously. "Starts off like a fairy-tale," he went on; "but it isn't. To be concise, I'm a man of the world with a slender purse and an inordinate craving for sensations; and," he added thoughtfully, "I guess I've had 'em. Why am I masquerading as a sailor on this rotten, old tub?" He grinned and spread his hand, fingers apart, over his dirty face. It was an old sign, and I had seen it before.

"Police, eh?" I remarked simply. "What for?"

He looked at me uncomfortably. "You're a wise one, aren't you?" he said, and seemed inclined to say no more.

This would never do, and I winked at him across the table.

"I ought to be," I admitted lightly. "I've been there myself." That shot completely disarmed him, and he waxed quite genial over our common bond, as he chose to call it.

"As to what they want me for——" He paused, and then went on slowly: "Why, they call it murder." He started at his own words, and added hastily, as though arguing with himself: "But it wasn't. I had to do it in self-defense—self-defense——" He trailed off into silence, and sat staring vacantly into space.

"Well," I said, "what then?"

He came back from his memories and offered me a drink.

"No," I refused, "I'll save mine till the end."

"I doubt that," he said dryly, and drank for both of us.

"It was about a girl," he continued, when he had wiped his mouth and set away the bottle. "But names and times and places make no difference; do they?"

I agreed with him, and he continued:

"You see, I met her, and she fell in love with me. She was pretty and a mighty nice girl all around, so I just let things slide, trusting to chance to straighten them out sooner or later. In the meantime I may have said something about marrying her." I never was quite sure about it, but, anyway, she thought I meant to. Well, when I found that out, I made up my mind that it was time to skip and cut loose from the whole business. Of course, I could have ducked without a word, but I liked her well enough and wanted to give her a square deal, so I walked up like a man and told her that the golden dream had tarnished. You are a man of the world; you understand?" he asked.

"Yes," I answered from the shadows.

"A word to the wise," he nodded with drunken gravity. "I couldn't marry her, could I, even if I had wanted to? She had no money, and I had precious little. It wouldn't 'a' been right by myself or by her, would it?" he ap-

pealed to me, and rambled off foolishly. The brandy was seeping into his speech. I waited a little while for him to pick up the thread of his story, but he made no effort to do so, and had evidently lost himself in the past.

"The girl," I reminded him at last when my patience was exhausted—"what of the girl?"

"Oh, the girl," he came to with a start. "Well, she raised Cam. I tried to explain how it would be best for both of us that way, but it wouldn't go, and she carried on about her blighted life and all that sort of rot until a person might have thought I was the blackest scoundrel unhung. She wouldn't listen to reason at all, so finally I told her she was acting like a fool, and left her."

His words reached my heart that time, but I made no sign, other than to move back a little farther into the darkness where no gleam from the candle could disclose the tear-drops in my eyes. I could wait a little longer. In the meanwhile he was making his own bed; and if he chose to make it with nettles that was his affair, not mine.

He had paused to drink, and now he went on brokenly:

"You see, the girl had a brother; in fact, she had two of 'em, but I never saw the elder; he was away somewhere. Come to think, I believe he was a sea-captain. Well, anyway, this brother, the one I knew, a kid he was, twenty or twenty-one years old, found me out long before the end, and I didn't have any great desire to see him after I had broken things off with his sister, so I decided to pull out early the next morning. But I wasn't quick enough, and the boy walked in on me while I was packing up. I heard a noise, turned around, and there he stood with a sort of unpleasant look in his eyes and something in his hand. How did I know it was a little bundle of knick-nacks I had given the girl? It looked mighty like a gun, and I wasn't taking any chances, so I shot him. Then I ran for it, and I've been running most of the time ever since."

He lapsed into silence, and his chin dropped forward on his breast.

I moved a little in the shadows, and the noise roused him. He raised his head and stared stupidly before him.

"I'm not afraid," he muttered, "of God or hell. It was his fault, and I had to do it. All that's coming to us we get here. There isn't any hereafter; it's only the rope I'm afraid of, only the rope," he laughed maudlinly. "That's my religion; what's yours?"

The game had gone far enough; the cards were all played, and I was tired of it. Drawing my stool into the light, I sat, with my chin in my hands and my elbows on the table, facing him. He was not looking at me, although his face was close to mine. The drink was strong in him, and his eyes were heavy.

"My religion," I said quietly, "is an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth; a life for a life."

He stirred uneasily and opened his eyes.

"Tis a good enough one," he mumbled. Then suddenly something in my words or in my voice went home to him, and, opening wide his eyes, he stared into mine.

What he saw there I do not know, but the drunkenness went out of his face, and the color fled from his cheeks. He lurched back from the table and stood up, ghastly white but sober. His jaw had fallen and his hands shook as if with a chill.

The drama was nearing its end, and I laughed at him—laughed at his helpless fear, his blanched face, and palsied figure. There was no mercy in my heart, nor pity; only a deep, quiet exultation. I moved a step toward him, and he recoiled as if he feared a blow.

"Damn you!" he screamed. "Who are you?"

But he had no need of word from me to know. He knew before he asked, and the knowledge stood in his eyes.

"I am his brother," I said simply.

His hand flew to his belt and came back empty. I snapped my fingers in his face and let him see the outline of his own gun in my pocket. Then he

wilted. The life, heart, and courage dropped from him like the bottom from a broken pail, and he sank down limply on the floor, a shattered, quivering wreck.

"You're not going to murder me," he whispered.

"No," I mocked, "I'm not going to murder you; but I am going to kill you in self-defense."

He shuddered, and, crawling toward me, burst into a perfect frenzy of protestation.

"Don't kill me," he moaned. "Oh, please don't kill me! I've been very wicked and I'm not fit to die. Give me time to make my peace with God."

"God?" I sneered. "I thought you had no God; and as for being fit to die, you are certainly unfit to live."

"Listen," he cried, dropping to his knees and clasping his hands in supplication. "I'm bad; I know it. But I mean to do right, and I'm trying to. If I'd had a square deal when I was a kid it wouldn't have happened; but I never had a chance. No," he wailed, "I never had a chance."

It was a coward's speech, and, walking around the table, I kicked him.

"Get up, you cur," I said. "I'm going to kill you, but in an honest fight, man to man."

"Look at me," he whined like a whipped dog. "Look, I'm sodden with drink and chilled with the sea. I'm hungry, too. I can't fight with you now. Oh, give me a little time to rest myself. Please, please just a few minutes."

He burst into tears and cringed there on the deck, the most abject figure I have ever seen.

"Get up," I said, and kicked him again.

He crawled to his feet, and, sobbing like a baby, stood with shaking knees before me.

"Look you," I said, "I, too, am chilled and hungry. Also this night I have been half drowned in the sea. If the drink is in you, that is your fault; but, believe me, were it not, and were you a thousand times stronger than you are, in the end it would make no dif-

ference. See," I went on slowly. "It shall be a fair fight on my part, just so long as it is fair on yours. But, mark you, one false move, and I'll shoot you down as I would a rabid dog and with less compunction."

I paused. Apparently he was paying no heed to my words, and there was a new look in his eyes which I did not understand.

"Do you hear?" I said sharply.

"I hear," he answered quietly—so quietly that I wondered at the change.

"Are you ready?" I asked.

"Yes, I am ready," he replied mechanically, and moved a step nearer to the table.

Then, before the slightest intimation of his purpose came to me, his hand swept out and fell palm down upon the fluttering candle.

Without an instant's hesitation, I threw myself backward, and, rolling over and over, brought up against a sheltering bulkhead. So far so good. I strained my ears and caught the faint aftermath of a scramble which had evidently been coincident with my own.

When this had died away, as it quickly did, I heard the creak of the ship and the beating of my heart—nothing else.

Where was he? He might be twenty feet away from me or his fingers might be closing on my throat. I took the revolver from my pocket and held it in my hand. The feel of the cold steel and the knowledge of what lay behind it brought back my nerve, and I set to pondering upon the situation.

His move had been well planned and well executed, but what had he hoped to gain by it? That was the question, and on its successful answer depended my safety. He could reach the open deck by no other means than the hatch; and the rotten ladder, I knew, would betray his presence at a touch.

Even should he succeed in escaping from the cabin, the advantage would still be mine, since I held the gun. True there might be other weapons about, but he could hardly hope to find them in total darkness without making some

noise, and that noise would sound his death-knell. As for remaining where he was, well and good. With the sunrise, which I reasoned could not be very far distant, we must assume our former relations, and in the end it would be the same.

Thus I figured over the possibilities as they presented themselves to my mind, and shortly arrived at the conclusion that his motive had been simply to gain time—the last resort of a desperate man. As there was no particular significance in his act, so I was in no immediate danger, and, crouching silently in the darkness, pistol in hand, straining my ears to catch the slightest sound, I waited for the sun.

Suddenly I awoke. I say awoke for lack of any better word to express my meaning. I had all the sensations attendant upon rousing from a deep sleep, and was, at the same time, perfectly cognizant of the fact that I had not for an instant closed an eye or relaxed my vigilance. The experiences which I had passed through were clearly present to my mind, and, although they were shrouded in the same dim haze which clouds the memory of a dream, yet I knew that I had not dreamed, and that the nightmare, impossibly ghastly as it seemed, was real.

In a word, my awakening was a transition from one state of consciousness into another, and the new ego, looking back upon its thoughts and actions of the past and finding in them nothing harmonious or compatible with itself, was terrified. This terror, deepening as the memory of the past gave way to a realization of the present, left me without strength, courage, or hope.

The day was breaking. It was apparently no lighter in the cabin, but I felt instinctively that it was less dark. In a few minutes the sunlight would stream into that foul den and then——

I shuddered at the thought and closed my hand over my pistol. Closed over, did I say? Aye, closed over and through. My hand was empty.

Could I have dozed and dropped the revolver? I felt around frantically on

the floor. It was not there. Then another possibility dawned on me: that fiend had it. He had crept upon me, slipped it from my loosened grasp, and now he was waiting to torture me as I had tortured him. There was no other explanation, and the possibility rapidly became a conviction. The horror of my situation now partially stunned me, and I fell back, inert and nerveless.

A moment later the sun rose, and, filtering through the starboard ports, showed me, save for myself, an empty room. There was only one object in the cabin behind which a man could conceal himself—across one bunk a pair of curtains were drawn.

Instantly I jumped at the conclusion that he was there, and, with a courage born of despair, I leaped to my feet, and, crossing the intervening space at a bound, tore apart the flimsy screen.

The bunk was empty. Perhaps he had slipped out through a port-hole? I made a hasty examination and found every port-hole locked and bolted.

Very well, there remained no possible means of exit but the ladder. I placed my foot upon the bottom rung, and it rattled like a drover's cart. How he could have ascended the thing without my hearing him I could not think; but that he had ascended it was evident. Unquestionably he was there behind the scuttle, waiting for me to show my head above the coping. And there he might wait, for all of me.

I sat down weakly on a stool and quickly realized that I had exacted more of myself than I had to give. In fact, I was very near to fainting.

After awhile my gaze chanced to fall upon the candle. It stood on the table where my memory told me that it should stand, but to my surprise the tallow was burned to the stick, and a crisp, black wick fully an inch long stuck straight up from the center. At the time I was surprised without knowing why; but afterward, when I came to put two and two together, I found good cause for wondering.

While I was still sitting there endeavoring to nurse back my strength

and scattered wits, there arose of a sudden a great commotion on the deck, in which I distinguished the tramp of several feet and a hum of voices. My first inclination was toward flight, though I am utterly unable to offer any logical excuse for such a ridiculous action now; then it seemed to me quite the only step to take.

However, fortunately for me, before I had time to put my intention into effect, a man stuck his head over the hatch coping and bellowed out:

"Ahoy, there! Any one there?"

Then his eyes met mine.

"By thunder!" he called to his fellows, "there's a man down here," and without more ado he climbed down the ladder, followed by his companions.

The newcomers quickly gathered about me, and, having shaken my hand and congratulated me on my escape, poured such a flood of questions into my ears that I could only shake my head in reply. As a matter of fact, I was interested neither in them nor their questions, and as soon as they quieted a little I made fair to ask them what they had done with the "other one."

"What other one?" inquired he who seemed to be the spokesman, and added: "Would you care for a drink of brandy?"

"Yes," I said, for I was on the ragged edge between holding my seat and falling to the floor. "Yes, I would, and there's a bottle under the table with a drop or so left in it." He walked away to get it, and I returned to the subject uppermost in my mind.

"The other one," I repeated. "You know, the man—the other man? Where is he?"

I noticed that they exchanged glances, and one who stood beside my stool looked at me pityingly.

"There isn't any one else," he said gently.

"Here you are," called the man who had been hunting for the brandy. "Here's the bottle, but as for there being only a drop or so, why, it's only half empty."

I didn't hear anything else, and afterward they told me that I fainted.

The Malefactor

By E. Phillips Oppenheim

Author of "The Betrayal," "A Maker of History," Etc.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED.

After serving a term of fifteen years in prison for manslaughter—sent there through the perfidy of the wife of the man whom he was wrongfully accused of murdering—Sir Wingrave Seton again takes his place in the world, cold, bitter, unfeeling, revengeful. One of his first steps is to engage as his private secretary a young newspaper man named Aynesworth, through whom he arranges for an interview with the woman who wronged him, now Lady Ruth Barrington. She is reluctant to see Sir Wingrave, but she is afraid to refuse, for she knows that he must still have in his possession several incriminating documents, which would have cleared him and compromised her had he seen fit to use them during the trial.

CHAPTER VI.



AYNESWORTH was waiting in the hall on the following afternoon when Lady Ruth arrived. He had half expected that she would drive up to the side door in a hansom, would wear a thick veil, and adopt the other appurtenances of clandestineism; but Lady Ruth was much too clever a woman for anything of the sort. She descended at the great front entrance from her own electric coupé, and swept into the hotel followed by her maid.

She stopped to speak to the manager of the hotel, who knew her from her visits to the world-famous restaurant, and she asked at once for Sir Wingrave Seton. Then she saw Aynesworth, and crossed the hall with outstretched hand.

"How nice of you to be here!" she murmured. "Can you take me to Sir Wingrave at once? I have such a busy afternoon that I was afraid at the last moment that I should be unable to come!"

Aynesworth led her toward the lift.

"Sir Wingrave is in his sitting-

room," he remarked. "It is only on the first floor."

She directed her maid where to wait, and followed him. On the way down the corridor he stole a glance at her. She was a little pale, and he could see that she had nerved herself to this interview with a great effort. As he knocked at the door, her great eyes were raised for a moment to his, and they were like the eyes of a frightened child.

"I am afraid!" she murmured.

There was no time for more. They were in the room, and Wingrave had risen to meet them. Lady Ruth did not hesitate for a moment. She crossed the room toward him with outstretched hands.

Aynesworth, who was standing a little on one side, watched their meeting with intense, though covert, interest. She had pushed back her veil; her head was a little upraised in a mute gesture of appeal.

She was pale to the lips, but her eyes were soft with hidden tears. Wingrave stood stonily silent, like a figure of fate. His hands remained by his side. Her welcome found no response from him. She came to a standstill, and, swaying

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a little, stretched out her hand and steadied herself by grasping the back of a chair.

"Wingrave," she murmured; and her voice was full of musical reproach.

Aynesworth turned to leave the room, but Wingrave, looking over her head, addressed him.

"You will remain here, Aynesworth," he said. "There are some papers at that desk which require sorting."

Aynesworth hesitated. He had caught the look in Lady Ruth's face.

"If you could excuse me for half-an-hour, Sir Wingrave," he began.

"I cannot spare you at present," Wingrave interrupted. "Kindly remain!"

Aynesworth had no alternative but to obey. Wingrave handed a chair to Lady Ruth. He was looking at her steadfastly. There were no signs of any sort of emotion in his face.

"Wingrave," she said softly, "are you going to be unkind to me—you, whom I have always thought of in my dreams as the most generous of men! I have looked forward so much to seeing you again—to knowing that you were free! Don't disappoint me!"

Wingrave laughed shortly, and Aynesworth bent closer over his work, with a gathering frown upon his forehead. A mirthless laugh is never a pleasant sound.

"Disappoint you!" he repeated calmly. "No, I must try and avoid that. You have been looking forward with much joy to this meeting, then? I am flattered."

She shivered a little.

"I have looked forward to it," she answered; and her voice was dull and lifeless with pain. "But you are not glad to see me," she continued. "There is no welcome in your face. You are changed—altogether. Why did you send for me?"

"Listen!"

There was a moment's silence. Wingrave was standing upon the hearth-rug—cold, passionless, sphinxlike. Lady Ruth was seated a few feet away, but her face was hidden.

"You owe me something," he said.

"Owe—you something?" she repeated vaguely.

"Do you deny it?" he said.

"Oh, no, no!" she declared with emotion. "Not for a moment."

"I want," he said, "to give you an opportunity of repaying some portion of that debt."

She raised her eyes to his. Her whispered words came so softly that they were almost inaudible.

"I am waiting," she said. "Tell me what I can do."

He commenced to speak at some length, very impassively, very deliberately.

"You will doubtless appreciate the fact," he said, "that my position to-day is a somewhat peculiar one. I have had enough of solitude. I am rich. I desire to mix once more on equal terms among my fellows. And against that I have the misfortune to be a convicted felon, who has spent the last ten or a dozen years among the scum of the earth, engaged in degrading tasks, and with no identity save a number. The position, as you will doubtless observe, is a difficult one."

Her eyes fell from his. Once more she shivered, as though with physical pain. Something that was like a smile, only that it was cold and lifeless, flitted across his lips.

"I have no desire," he continued, "to live in foreign countries. On the contrary, I have plans which necessitate my living in England. The difficulties by this time are, without doubt, fully apparent to you."

She said nothing. Her eyes were once more watching his face.

"My looking-glass," he continued, "shows me that I am changed beyond any reasonable chance of recognition. I do not believe that the Wingrave Seton of to-day would readily be recognized as the Wingrave Seton of twelve years ago. But I propose to make assurance doubly sure. I am leaving this country for several years. I shall go to America, and I shall return as Mr. Wingrave, millionaire—I propose, by the way, to make money there. I desire, under that identity, to take my

place once more among my fellows. I shall bring letters of introduction—to you.”

There was a long and somewhat ominous silence. Lady Ruth's eyes were fixed upon the floor. She was thinking, and thinking rapidly, but there were no signs of it in her pale, drawn face. At last she looked up.

“There is my husband,” she said. “He would recognize you, if no one else did.”

“You are a clever woman,” he answered. “I leave it to you to deal with your husband as seems best to you.”

“Other people,” she faltered, “would recognize you.”

“Do me the favor,” he begged her, “to look at me carefully for several moments. You doubtless have some imperfect recollection of what I was. Compare it with my present appearance. I venture to think that you will agree with me. Recognition is barely possible.”

Again there was silence. Lady Ruth seemed to have no words, but there was the look of a frightened child upon her face.

“I am sorry,” he continued, “that the idea does not appeal to you. I can understand that my presence may serve to recall a period which you and your husband would doubtless prefer to forget——”

“Stop!”

A little staccato cry of pain, a cry which seemed to spring into life from a tortured heart, broke from her lips. Aynesworth heard it, and at that moment he hated his employer. Wingrave paused for a moment politely, and then continued:

“But, after all, I can assure you that you will find very little in the Mr. Wingrave of New York to remind you of the past. I shall do my utmost to win for myself a place in your esteem which will help you to forget the other relationship, which, if my memory serves me, used once to exist between us.”

She raised her head. Either she realized that for the present the man was immune against all sentiment, or his

calm brutality had had a correspondingly hardening effect upon her.

“If I agree,” she said, “will you give me back my letters?”

“No,” he answered.

“What are you going to do with them?”

“It depends,” he said, “upon you. I enter into no engagement. I make no promises. I simply remind you that it would be equally possible for me to take my place in the world as a rehabilitated Wingrave Seton. Ten years ago I yielded to sentiment. To-day I have outlived it.”

“Ten years ago,” she murmured, “you were a hero. God knows what you are now!”

“Exactly,” he answered smoothly. “I am free to admit that I am a puzzle to myself. I find myself, in fact, a most interesting study.”

“I consent,” she said, with a little shudder. “I am going now.”

“You are a sensible woman,” he answered. “Aynesworth, show Lady Barrington to her carriage.”

She rose to her feet. Hung from her neck by a chain of fine gold was a large chinchilla muff. She stood before him and her hands had sought its shelter. Timidly she withdrew one.

“Will you shake hands with me, Wingrave?” she asked timidly.

He shook his head.

“Forgive me,” he said; “I may better my manners in America, but at present I cannot.”

She passed out of the room. Aynesworth followed, closing the door behind them. In the corridor she stumbled and caught at his arm for support.

“Don't speak to me,” she gasped. “Take me where I can sit down.”

He found her a quiet corner in the drawing-room. She sat perfectly still for nearly five minutes, with her eyes closed. Then she looked at her companion.

“Mr. Aynesworth,” she said, “are you so poor that you must serve a man like that?”

He shook his head.

“It is not poverty,” he answered. “I

knew his history, and I am interested in him!"

"You write novels, don't you?" she asked.

"I try," he answered. "His story fascinated me. He stands to-day in a unique position to life. I want to see how he will come out of it."

"You knew his story—the truth?"

"Everything," he answered. "I heard it from a journalist who was in court, his only friend, the only man who knew."

"Where is he now?"

"On his way to Japan."

She drew a little breath between her teeth.

"There were rumors," she said. "It was hard for me at first, but I lived them down. I was very young then. I ought not to have accepted his sacrifice. I wish to Heaven I had not. I wish that I had faced the scandal then. It is worse to be in the power of a man like this to-day. Mr. Aynesworth!"

"Lady Barrington!"

"Do you think that he has the right to keep those letters?"

"I cannot answer that question."

"Will you be my friend?"

"So far as I can—in accordance with my obligations to my employer."

She tried him no further then, but rose and walked slowly out of the room. He found her maid, and saw them to their carriage. Then he returned to the sitting-room. Wingrave was smoking a cigarette.

"I am trying the humanizing influence," he remarked. "Got rid of her ladyship?"

"Lady Barrington has just gone," Aynesworth answered.

"Have you promised to steal the letters yet?" he inquired.

"Not yet."

"Her dainty ladyship has not bid high enough, I suppose," he continued. "Don't be afraid to open your mouth. There's another woman there besides—the Lady Ruth Barrington who opens bazaars, and patronizes charity, and entertains royalty. Ask what you want and she'll pay."

"What a brute you are!" Aynesworth exclaimed involuntarily.

"Of course I am," he admitted. "I know that. But whose fault is it? It isn't mine. I've lived the life of a brute creature for ten years. You don't abuse a one-legged man, poor devil! I've had other things amputated. I was like you once. It seemed all right to me to go under to save a woman's honor. I didn't mind. You never have. Therefore, I say you've no right to call me a brute. Personally, I don't object. It is simply a matter of equity."

"I amend it," Aynesworth declared. "You are acting like a brute."

"Precisely. I didn't make myself what I am. Prison did it. Go and try ten years yourself, and you'll find you will have to grope about for your fine emotions. Are you coming to America with me?"

"I suppose so," Aynesworth answered. "When do we start?"

"Saturday week."

"Sport west, or civilization east?"

"Both," Wingrave answered. "Here is a list of the kit which we shall require. You can add the things which I have forgotten. I pay for both."

"Very good of you," Aynesworth answered.

"Not at all. I don't suppose you'd come without. Can you shoot?"

"A bit," he admitted.

"Be particular about the rifles. I can take you to a little corner in Canada where the bears don't stand on ceremony. Put everything in hand, and be ready to come down to Cornwall with me on Monday."

"Cornwall!" Aynesworth exclaimed. "What on earth are we going to do in Cornwall?"

"I have an estate there, the home of my ancestors, which I am going to sell. I am the last of the Wingraves, fortunately, and I am going to smash the family-tree, sell the heirlooms, and burn the family records."

"I shouldn't if I were you," Aynesworth said quietly. "You are a young man yet. You may come back to your own."

"Meaning?"

"You may smoke enough cigarettes to become actually humanized. One never can tell! I have known men proclaim themselves cynics for life, who have been making idiots of themselves with their own children in five years."

Wingrave nodded gravely.

"True enough," he answered. "But the one thing which no man can mistake is death. Listen, and I will quote some poetry to you. I think it is something like this:

"The rivers of ice may melt and the mountains crumble into dust, but the heart of a dead man is like the seed plot unsown. Green grass shall not sprout there, nor flowers blossom, nor shall all the ages of eternity show there any sign of life."

He spoke as though he had been reading from a child's primer. When he had finished, he replaced his cigarette between his teeth.

"I am a dead man," he said calmly. "Dead as the wildest seed plot in God's most forgotten acre!"

CHAPTER VII.

She came slowly toward the two men through the overgrown rose-garden, a thin, pale, wild-eyed child, dressed in most uncompromising black. It was a matter of doubt whether she was the more surprised to see them, or they to find anybody else, in this wilderness of desolation. They stood face to face with her upon the narrow path.

"Have you lost your way?" she inquired politely.

"We were told," Aynesworth answered, "that there was a gate in the wall there, through which we could get out on to the cliffs."

"Who told you so?" she asked.

"The housekeeper," Aynesworth answered. "I will not attempt to pronounce her name."

"Mrs. Tresfarwin," the child said. "It is not really difficult. But she had no right to send you through here. It is all private, you know!"

"And you?" Aynesworth asked, with a smile. "You have permission, I suppose?"

"Yes," she answered. "I have lived here all my life. I go where I please. Have you seen the pictures?"

"We have just been looking at them," Aynesworth answered.

"Aren't they beautiful?" she exclaimed. "I—oh!"

She sat suddenly down on a rough wooden seat and commenced to cry. For the first time Wingrave looked at her with some apparent interest.

"Why, whatever is the matter with you, child?" Aynesworth exclaimed.

"I have loved them so all my life," she sobbed; "the pictures, and the house, and the gardens, and now I have to go away! I don't know where! Nobody seems to know!"

Aynesworth looked down at her black frock.

"You have lost some one, perhaps?" he said.

"My father," she answered quietly. "He was organist here, and he died last week."

"And you have no other relatives?" he asked.

"None at all. No one—seems—quite to know—what is going to become of me!" she sobbed.

"Where are you staying now?" he inquired.

"With an old woman who used to look after our cottage," she answered. "But she is very poor, and she cannot keep me any longer. Mrs. Colson says that I must go and work, and I am afraid. I don't know any one except at Tredowen. And I don't know how to work. And I don't want to go away from the pictures and the garden and the sea. It is all so beautiful, isn't it? Don't you love Tredowen?"

"Well, I haven't been here very long, you see," Aynesworth explained.

Wingrave spoke for the first time. His eyes were fixed upon the child, and Aynesworth could see that she shrank from his cold, unsympathetic scrutiny.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"Juliet Lundy," she answered.

"How long was your father organist at the church?"

"I don't know," she answered. "Ever since I was born, and before."

"And how old are you?"

"Fourteen next birthday!"

"And all that time," he asked, "has there been no one living at Tredowen?"

"No one except Mrs. Tresfarwin," she answered. "It belongs to a very rich man who is in prison."

Wingrave's face was immovable. He stood on one side, however, and turned toward his companion.

"We are keeping this young lady," he remarked, "from what seems to be her daily pilgrimage. I wonder whether it is really the pictures, or Mrs. Tresfarwin's cakes?"

She turned her shoulder upon him in silent scorn, and looked at Aynesworth a little wistfully.

"Good-by," she said.

He waved his hand as he strolled after Wingrave.

"There you are, Mr. Lord of the Manor," he said. "You can't refuse to do something for the child. Her father was organist at your own church, and a hard struggle he must have had of it, with an absentee landlord, and a congregation of sea-gulls, I should think."

"Are you joking?" Wingrave asked coldly.

"I was never more in earnest in my life," Aynesworth answered. "The girl's come from gentlefolks. Did you see what a delicate face she had, and how nicely she spoke? You wouldn't have her sent out as a servant, would you?"

Wingrave looked at his companion ominously.

"You have a strange idea of the duties of a landlord," he remarked. "Do you seriously suppose that I am responsible for the future of every brat who grows upon this estate?"

"Of course not," Aynesworth answered. "You must own for yourself that this case is exceptional. Let us go down to the vicarage and inquire about it."

"I shall do nothing of the sort," Wingrave answered. "Nor will you. Do you see the spray coming over the cliffs there? The sea must be worth watching."

Aynesworth walked by his side in silence. He dared not trust himself to speak. Wingrave climbed with long, rapid strides to the summit of the headland, and stood there with his face turned seaward.

The long breakers were sweeping in from the Atlantic with a low, insistent roar; as far as the eye could reach the waves were crusted with white foam. Every now and then the spray fell around the two men in a little dazzling shower; the very atmosphere was salt. About their heads the sea-gulls whirled and shrieked. From the pebbled beach to the horizon there was nothing to break the monotony of that empty waste of waters.

Wingrave stood perfectly motionless, with his eyes fixed upon the horizon. Minute after minute passed, and he showed no signs of moving. Aynesworth found himself presently engaged in watching him.

Thoughts must be passing through his brain. It was here that he had spent his boyhood; barely an hour ago the two men had stood before the picture of his father. It was here, if anywhere, that he might regain some part of his older and more natural self. Was it a struggle, Aynesworth wondered, that was going on within the man? There were no signs of it in his face. Simply he stood and looked and looked, as though, by infinite perseverance, the very horizon itself might recede, and the thing for which he sought become revealed.

Aynesworth turned away at last, and there, not many yards behind, apparently watching them, stood the child. He waved his hand and advanced toward her. Her eyes were fixed upon Wingrave half fearfully.

"I am afraid of the other gentleman," she whispered, as he reached her side. "Will you come a little way with me? I will show you a sea-gull's nest."

They left Wingrave where he was, and went hand-in-hand along the cliff side. She was a curious mixture of shyness and courage. She talked very little, but she gripped her companion's fingers tightly.

"I can show you," she said, "where the sea-gulls build, and I can tell you the very spot in the sea where the sun goes down night after night. There are some baby sea-gulls in one of the nests, but I daren't go very near, for the mother bird is so strong. Father used to say that when they have their baby birds to look after they are as fierce as eagles."

"Your father used to walk with you here, Juliet?" Aynesworth asked.

"Always till the last few months, when he got weaker and weaker," she answered. "Since then I come every day alone."

"Don't you find it lonely?" he asked.

She shook her head.

"At first," she answered. "Not now. It makes me unhappy. Would you like to go down on the beach and look for shells? I can find you some very pretty ones."

They clambered down, and wandered hand-in-hand by the seashore. She told him quaint little stories of the smugglers, of wrecks, and the legends of the fisher people. Coming back along the sands, she clung to his arm and grew more silent. Her eyes sought his every now and then wistfully. Presently she pointed out a tiny white-washed cottage, standing by itself on a piece of waste ground.

"That is where I live now, at least for a day or two," she said. "They cannot keep me any longer. When are you going away?"

"Very soon, I am afraid, little girl," he answered. "I will come and see you, though, before I go."

"You promise?" she said solemnly.

"I promise," Aynesworth repeated.

Then she held up her face a little timidly, and he kissed her. Afterward, he watched her turn with slow, reluctant footsteps to the unpromising abode which she had pointed out. Aynesworth made his way to the inn, cursing his impecuniosity and Wingrave's brutal indifference.

He found the latter busy writing letters.

"Doing your work, Aynesworth?" he remarked coldly. "Be so good as to

write Christie's for me, and ask them to send down a valuer to go through the pictures."

"You are really going to sell!" Aynesworth exclaimed.

"Most certainly," Wingrave answered. "Heirlooms and family pictures are only so much rubbish to me. I am the last of my line, and I doubt whether even my lawyer could discover a next of kin for my personal property. Sell! Of course I'm going to sell! What use is all this hoarded rubbish to me? I am going to turn it into gold!"

"And what use is gold?" Aynesworth asked curiously. "You have plenty!"

"Not enough for my purpose," Wingrave declared. "We are going to America to make more."

"It's vandalism," Aynesworth said; "rank vandalism. The place as it is is a picture. The furniture and the house have grown old together. Why, you might marry!"

Wingrave scowled at the younger man across the room.

"You are a fool, Aynesworth," he said shortly. "Take down these letters——"

After dinner, Wingate went out alone. Aynesworth followed him about an hour later, when his work was done, and made his way toward the vicarage. It was barely nine o'clock, but the little house seemed already to be in darkness. He rang twice before anybody answered him. Then he heard slow, shuffling footsteps within, and a tall, gaunt man in clerical attire, and carrying a small lamp, opened the door.

Aynesworth made the usual apologies, and was ushered into a bare, gloomy-looking apartment, which, from the fact of its containing a writing-table and a few books, he imagined must be the study. His host never asked him to sit down. He was a long, unkempt looking man, with a cold, forbidding face, and his manner was the reverse of cordial.

"I have called to see you," Aynesworth explained, "with reference to

one of your parishioners—the daughter of your late organist.”

“Indeed!” the clergyman remarked solemnly.

“I saw her to-day for the first time, and have only just heard her story,” Aynesworth continued. “It seems to be a very sad one.”

His listener inclined his head.

“I am, unfortunately, a poor man,” Aynesworth continued, “but I have some friends who are well off, and I could lay my hands upon a little ready money. I should like to discuss the matter with you, and see if we cannot arrange something to give her a start in life.”

The clergyman cleared his throat.

“It is quite unnecessary,” he answered. “A connection of her father’s has come forward at the last moment, who is able to do all that is required for her. Her future is provided for.”

Aynesworth was a little taken aback.

“I am very glad to hear it,” he declared. “I understood that she had neither friends or relations.”

“You were misinformed,” the other answered. “She has both.”

“May I ask who has turned up so unexpectedly?” Aynesworth inquired. “I have taken a great fancy to the child.”

The clergyman edged a little toward the door, and the coldness of his manner was unmistakable.

“I do not wish to seem discourteous,” he said, “but I cannot recognize that you have any right to ask me these questions. You may accept my word that the child is to be fittingly provided for.”

Aynesworth felt the color rising in his cheeks.

“I trust,” he said, “that you do not find my interest in her unwarrantable. My visit to you is simply a matter of charity. If my aid is not needed, so much the better. All the same, I should like to know where she is going, and who her friends are.”

“I do not find myself at liberty to afford you any information,” was the curt reply.

There was nothing left for Aynes-

worth to do but to put on his hat and walk out, which he did.

Wingrave met him in the hall on his return.

“Where have you been?” he asked a little sharply.

“On a private errand,” Aynesworth answered, irritated by his words and look.

“You are my secretary,” Wingrave said coldly. “I do not pay you to go about executing private errands.”

Aynesworth looked at him in surprise. Did he really wish to quarrel?

“I imagine, sir,” he said, “that my time is my own, when I have no work of yours on hand. If you think otherwise——”

He paused, and looked at his employer significantly. Wingrave turned on his heel.

“Be so kind,” he said, “as to settle the bill here to-night. We leave by the seven o’clock train in the morning.”

“To-morrow!” Aynesworth exclaimed.

“Precisely.”

“Do you mind,” he asked, “if I follow by a later train?”

“I do,” Wingrave answered. “I need you in London directly we arrive.”

“I am afraid,” Aynesworth said, after a moment’s reflection, “that it is impossible for me to leave.”

“Why?”

“You will think it a small thing,” he said, “but I have given my promise. I must see that child again before I go!”

“You are referring,” he asked, “to the black-frocked little creature we saw about the place yesterday?”

“Yes.”

Wingrave regarded his secretary as one might look at a person who has suddenly taken leave of his senses.

“I am sorry,” he said, “to interfere with your engagements, but it is necessary that we should both leave by the seven o’clock train to-morrow morning.”

Aynesworth reflected for a moment.

“If I can see the child first,” he said, “I will come. If not, I will follow you at midday.”

“In the latter case,” Wingrave re-

marked, "pray do not trouble to follow me, unless your own affairs take you to London. Our connection will have ended."

"You mean this?" Aynesworth asked.

"It is my custom," Wingrave answered, "to mean what I say."

Aynesworth set his alarm that night for half-past five. It seemed to him that his future would largely depend upon how soundly the child slept.

CHAPTER VIII.

The cottage, as Aynesworth neared it, showed no sign of life. The curtainless windows were blank and empty, no smoke ascended from the chimney. Its plastered front was innocent of any form of creeper, but in the few feet of garden in front a great, overgrown, wild-rose bush, starred with deep-red blossoms, perfumed the air. As he drew near, the door suddenly opened, and with a little cry of welcome the child rushed out to him.

"How lovely of you!" she cried. "I saw you coming from my window."

"You are up early," he said, smiling down at her.

"The sun woke me," she answered. "It always does. I was going down to the sands. Shall we go together? Or would you like to go into the gardens at Tredowen? The flowers are beautiful there while the dew is on them!"

"I am afraid," Aynesworth answered, "that I cannot do either. I have come to say good-by."

The light died out of her face suddenly. The delicate beauty of her gleaming eyes and quivering mouth had vanished. She was once more the pale, wan little child he had seen coming slowly up the garden path at Tredowen.

"You are going—so soon!" she murmured.

He took her hand and led her away over the short green turf of the common.

"We only came for a few hours," he told her. "But I have good news for you, Juliet, unless you know already.

Mr. Saunders has found out some of your friends. They are going to look after you properly, and you will not be alone any more."

"What time are you going?" she asked.

"Silly child," he answered, giving her hand a shake. "Listen to what I am telling you. You are going to have friends to look after you always. 'Aren't you glad?'"

"No, I am not glad," she answered passionately. "I don't want you to go away. I am—lonely."

Her arms suddenly sought his neck, and her face was buried on his shoulder. He soothed her as well as he could.

"I must go, little girl," he said, "for I am off to America almost at once. As soon as I can, after I come back, I will come and see you."

"You have only been here one day," she sobbed.

"I would stay if I could, dear," Aynesworth answered. "Come, dry those eyes and be a brave girl. Think how nice it will be to go and live with people who will take care of you properly, and be fond of you. Why, you may have a pony, and all sorts of nice things!"

"I don't want a pony," she answered, hanging on his arm. "I don't want to go away. I want to stay here—and wait till you come back."

He laughed.

"Why, when I come back, little woman," he answered, "you will be almost grown up. Come, dry your eyes now, and I tell you what we will do. You shall come back with me to breakfast, and then drive up to the station and see us off."

"I should like to come," she whispered, "but I am afraid of the other gentleman."

"Very likely we shan't see him," Aynesworth answered. "If we do he won't hurt you."

"I don't like his face!" she persisted.

"Well, we won't look at it," Aynesworth answered. "But breakfast we must have!"

They were half-way through the meal, and Juliet had quite recovered

her spirits, when Wingrave entered. He looked at the two with impassive face, and took his place at the table. He wished the child "Good morning" carelessly, but made no remark as to her presence there.

"I have just been telling Juliet some good news," Aynesworth remarked. "I went to see Mr. Saunders, the vicar here, last night, and he has found out some of her father's friends. They are going to look after her."

Wingrave showed no interest in the information. But a moment later he addressed Juliet for the first time.

"Are you glad that you are going away from Tredowen?" he asked.

"I am very, very sorry," she answered, the tears gathering once more in her eyes.

"But you want to go to school, don't you, and see other girls?" he asked.

She shook her head decidedly.

"It will break my heart," she said quietly, "to leave Tredowen. I think that if I have to go away from the pictures and the garden and the sea, I shall never be happy any more."

"You are a child," he remarked contemptuously; "you do not understand. If you go away, you can learn to paint pictures yourself like those at Tredowen. You will find that the world is full of other beautiful places."

The sympathetic aspect of his words was altogether destroyed by the thin note of careless irony, which even the child understood. She felt that he was mocking her.

"I could never be happy," she said simply, "away from Tredowen. You understand, don't you?" she added, turning confidentially to Aynesworth.

"You think so now, dear," he said, "but remember that you are very young. There are many things for you to learn before you grow up."

"I am not a dunce," she replied. "I can talk French and German, and do arithmetic, and play the organ. Father used to teach me these things. I can learn at Tredowen very well. I hope that my friends will let me stay here."

Wingrave took no more notice of her. She and Aynesworth walked together to

the station. As they passed the little whitewashed cottage, she suddenly let go his hand and darted inside.

"Wait one moment," she cried breathlessly.

She reappeared almost at once, holding something tightly clenched in her right hand. She showed it to him shyly.

"It is for you, please," she said.

It was a silver locket, and inside was a little picture of herself. Aynesworth stooped down and kissed her. He had had as many presents in his life as most men, but never an offering which came to him quite like that.

They stood still for a moment, and he held her hands. Already the morning was astir. The sea-gulls were wheeling, white-winged and noiseless, above their heads; the air was fragrant with the scent of cottage flowers. Like a low, sweet undernote, the sea came rolling in upon the firm sands—out to the west it stretched like a sheet of softly swaying inland water. For those few moments there seemed no note of discord—and then the harsh whistle of an approaching train! They took hold of hands and ran.

It was, perhaps, as well that their farewells were cut short. There was scarcely time for more than a few hurried words, before the train moved out from the queer little station, and, with his head out of window, Aynesworth waved his hand to the black-frocked child, with her pale, eager face already stained with tears—a lone, strange little figure, full of a sort of plaintive grace as she stood there, against a background of milk-cans, waving a crumpled handkerchief.

Wingrave, who had been buried in a morning paper, looked up presently.

"If our journeyings," he remarked dryly, "are to contain everywhere incidents such as these, they will become a sort of sentimental pilgrimage."

Aynesworth shrugged his shoulders.

"I am sorry," he said, "that my interest in the child has annoyed you. At any rate, it is over now. The parson was mysterious, but he assured me that she was provided for."

Wingrave looked across the carriage with cold, reflective curiosity.

"Your point of view," he remarked, "is a mystery to me. I cannot see how the future of an unfledged brat like that can possibly concern you."

"Perhaps not," Aynesworth answered; "but you must remember that you are a little out of touch with your fellows just now. I dare say when you were my age you would have felt as I feel. I dare say that as the years go on you will feel like it again."

Wingrave was thoughtful for a moment.

"So you think," he remarked, "that I may yet have with me the making of a sentimentalist."

Aynesworth returned his gaze as steadfastly.

"One never can tell," he answered. "You may change, of course. I hope that you will."

"You are candid, at any rate."

"I do not think," Aynesworth answered, "that there is any happiness in life for the man who lives entirely apart from his fellow-creatures. Not to feel is not to live. I think that the first real act of kindness which you feel prompted to perform will mark the opening of a different life for you."

Wingrave spread out the newspaper.

"I think," he said, with a faint sneer, "that it is quite time you took this sea voyage."

CHAPTER IX.

Mr. Lumley Barrington, K. C. and M. P., was in the act of stepping into his carriage to drive down to the House of Commons when he was intercepted by a message. It was his wife's maid who came hurrying out after him.

"I beg your pardon, sir," she said, "but her ladyship regularly wished to see you as soon as you came in."

"Is your mistress in?" Barrington asked, in some surprise.

"Yes, sir," the maid answered. "Her ladyship is resting, before she goes to the ball at Calgram House. She is in her room now."

"I will come up at once," Barrington said.

He kept the carriage waiting while he ascended to his wife's room. There was no answer to his knock. He opened the door softly. She was asleep on a couch drawn up before the fire.

He crossed the room noiselessly, and stood looking down upon her. Her lithe, soft figure had fallen into a posture of graceful, almost voluptuous, ease; the ribbons and laces of her muslin dressing-gown quivered gently with her deep, regular breathing. She had thrown off her slippers, and one long, slender foot was exposed; the other was doubled up underneath her body.

Her face was almost like the face of a child, smooth and unwrinkled, save for one line by the eyes, where she laughed. He looked at her steadfastly. Could the closing of the eyes, indeed, make all the difference? Life and the knowledge of life seemed things far from her consciousness. Could one look like that—even in sleep—and underneath—! Barrington broke away from his train of thought, and woke her quickly.

She sat up and yawned.

"Parsons managed to catch you, then," she remarked.

"Yes," he answered. "I was just off. I got away from Wills' dinner-party early, and called here for some notes. I must be at the House"—he glanced at the clock—"in three-quarters of an hour!"

She nodded. "I won't keep you as long as that."

Her eyes met his a little furtively, full of inquiry.

"I have done what you wished," he said quietly. "I called at the Clarence Hotel."

"You saw him?"

"No. He sent back my card. He declined to see me."

She showed no sign of disappointment. She sat up and looked into the fire, smoothing her hair mechanically with her hands.

"Personally," Barrington continued, "I could see no object whatever in my visit. I have nothing to say to him, nor

I should think, he to me. I am sorry for him, of course, but he'd never believe me if I told him so. What happened to him was partly my fault, and unless he's changed he's not likely to forget it."

She swayed a little toward him.

"It was partly—also—mine," she murmured.

"I don't see that at all," he objected. "You, at any rate, were blameless."

She looked up at him, and he was astonished to find how pale she was.

"I was not," she said calmly.

There was a short silence. Barrington had the air of a man who has received a shock.

"Ruth!" he exclaimed, glancing toward the door, and speaking almost in a whisper. "Do you mean—that there are things which I have never known?"

"Yes," she answered. "I mean that he might, if he chose, do us now—both of us—an immense amount of harm."

Barrington sat down at the end of the sofa. He knew his wife well enough to understand that this was serious.

"Let us understand one another, Ruth," he said quietly. "I always thought that you were a little severe on Wingrave, at the trial. He may bear you a grudge for that; it is very possible that he does. But what can he do now? He had his chance to cross-examine you, and he let it go by."

"He has some letters of mine," Lady Ruth said slowly.

"Letters! Written before the trial?"

"Yes."

"Why did he not make use of them there?"

"If he had," Lady Ruth said, with her eyes fixed upon the carpet, "the sympathy would have been the other way. He would have got off with a much lighter sentence, and you—would not have married me."

"Good God!" Barrington muttered.

"You see," Lady Ruth continued, resting her hand upon her husband's coat sleeve, "the thing happened all in a second. I had the check in my hand when you and Sir William came crashing through that window, and Sir William's eyes were upon me. The only

way to save myself was to repudiate it, and let Wingrave get out of the affair as well as he could. Of course, I never guessed what was going to happen."

"Then it was Wingrave," Barrington muttered, "who played the game?"

"Yes," Lady Ruth answered quietly. "But I am not so sure about him now. You and I, Lumley, know one another a little better to-day than we did twelve years ago. We have had a few of the corners knocked off, I suppose. I can tell you things now I didn't care to then. Wingrave had lent me money before. He has letters from me to-day, thanking him for it."

Barrington was a large, florid man, well-built and well set up. In court he presented rather a formidable appearance, with his truculent chin, his straight, firm mouth, and his commanding presence. Yet there was nothing about him now which would have inspired fear in the most nervous of witnesses. He looked like a man all broken up by some unexpected shock.

"If he had produced those letters—at the trial——"

Lady Ruth shrugged her shoulders.

"I risked it, anyhow," she said. "I had to. My story was the only one which gave me a dog's chance, and I didn't mean to go under—then. Wingrave never gave me away, but I fancy he's feeling differently about it now."

"How do you know, Ruth?"

"I have seen him. He sent for me," she answered. "Lumley, don't look at me like that. We're not in the nursery, you and I. I went because I had to. He's going to America for a time, and then he's coming back here. I think that when he comes back—he means mischief!"

"He is not the sort of man to forget," Barrington said half to himself.

She shuddered ever so slightly. Then she stretched out a long, white arm, and, drawing his head suddenly down to her, kissed him on the lips.

"If only," she murmured, "he would give up the letters! Without them he might say—anything. No one would believe."

Barrington raised his eyes to hers. There was something almost pathetic in the worshiping light which shone there. He was, as he had always been, her abject slave.

"Can you think of any way?" he asked. "Shall I go to him again?"

"Useless," she answered. "You have nothing to offer in exchange. He would not give them to me. He surely would not give them to you. Shall I tell you what is in his mind? Listen, then! He is going to America almost at once. He is rich now; he means to make more money there. Then he will return, calling himself Mr. Wingrave—an American—with imaginary letters of introduction—to us. He has ambitions—I don't know what they are, but they seem to entail his holding some sort of a place in society. We are to be his sponsors."

"Is it practicable?" he asked.

"Quite," she answered. "He is absolutely unrecognizable now. He has changed cruelly. Can't you imagine the horror of it? He will be always in evidence; always with those letters in the background; he means to make life a sort of torture chamber for us!"

"Better defy him at once, and get it over," Barrington said. "After all, don't you think that the harm he could do is a little imaginary?"

She brushed the suggestion aside with a little shiver.

"Shall I tell you what he would do, Lumley?" she said, leaning toward him. "He would have my letters and a copy of my evidence printed in an elegant little volume and distributed among my friends. It would come one day like a bomb, and nothing that you or I could do would alter it in the least. Your career and my social position would be ruined. Success brings enemies, you know, Lumley, and I have rather more than my share."

"Then we are helpless," he said.

"Unless we can get the letters—or unless he should never return from America," she answered.

Barrington moved uneasily in his seat. He knew very well that some

scheme was already forming in his wife's brain.

"If there is anything that I can do," he said in a low tone, "don't be afraid to tell me."

"There is one chance," she answered—"a sort of forlorn hope, but you might try it. He has a secretary, a young man named Aynesworth. If he were on our side——"

"Don't you think," Barrington interrupted, "that you would have more chance with him than I?"

She laughed softly.

"You foolish man," she said, touching his fingers lightly. "I believe you think I am irresistible!"

"I have seen a good many lions tamed," he reminded her.

"Nonsense! Anyhow, there is one here who seems quite insensible. I have talked already with Mr. Aynesworth. He would not listen to me!"

"Ah!"

"Nevertheless," she continued softly, "of one thing I am very sure. Every man is like every woman; he is vulnerable if you can discover the right spot and the right weapons. Mr. Aynesworth is not a woman's man, but I fancy that he is ambitious. I thought that you might go and see him. He has rooms somewhere in Dorset Street."

He rose to his feet. A glance at the clock reminded him of the hour.

"I will go," he said. "I will do what I can. I think, dear," he added, bending over her to say farewell, "that you should have been the man!"

She laughed softly.

"Am I such a failure as a woman, then?" she asked, with a swift, upward glance. "Don't be foolish, Lumley. My woman will be here to dress me directly. You must really go away."

He strode down the stairs with tingling pulses, and drove to the House, where his speech, a little florid in its rhetoric, and verbose as became the man, was nevertheless a great success.

"Quite a clever fellow, Barrington," one of his acquaintances remarked, "when you get him away from his wife."

CHAPTER X.

Aynesworth ceased tugging at the strap of his portmanteau, and rose slowly to his feet. A visitor had entered his rooms—apparently unannounced.

"I must apologize," the newcomer said, "for my intrusion. Your house-keeper, I presume it was, whom I saw below, told me to come up."

Aynesworth pushed forward a chair.

"Won't you sit down?" he said. "I believe that I am addressing Mr. Lumley Barrington."

Not altogether without embarrassment, Barrington seated himself. Something of his ordinary confidence of bearing and demeanor had certainly deserted him. His manner, too, was nervous. He had the air of being altogether ill at ease.

"I must apologize further, Mr. Aynesworth," he continued, "for an apparently ill-timed visit. You are, I see, on the eve of a journey."

"I am leaving for America to-morrow," Aynesworth answered.

"With Sir Wingrave Seton, I presume?" Barrington remarked.

"Precisely," Aynesworth answered.

Barrington hesitated for a moment.

"Mr. Aynesworth," he said, "I must throw myself upon your consideration. You can possibly surmise the reason for my visit."

Aynesworth shook his head.

"I am afraid," he said, "that I must plead guilty to denseness—in this particular instance, at any rate. I am altogether at a loss to account for it."

"You have had some conversation with my wife, I believe?"

"Yes. But——"

"Before you proceed, Mr. Aynesworth," Barrington interrupted—"one word. You are aware that Sir Wingrave Seton is in possession of certain documents in which my wife is interested, which he refuses to give up?"

"I have understood that such is the case," Aynesworth admitted. "Will you pardon me if I add that it is a matter which I can scarcely discuss?"

Barrington shrugged his shoulder.

"Let it go, for the moment," he said.

"There is something else which I want to say to you."

Aynesworth nodded a little curtly. He was not very favorably impressed with his visitor.

"Well?"

Barrington leaned forward in his chair.

"Mr. Aynesworth," he said, "you have made for yourself some reputation as a writer. Your name has been familiar to me for some time. I was at college, I believe, with your uncle, Stanley Aynesworth."

He paused. Aynesworth said nothing.

"I want to know," Barrington continued impulsively, "what has induced you to accept a position with such a man as Wingrave?"

"That," Aynesworth declared, "is easily answered. I was not looking for a secretaryship at all, or anything of the sort, but I chanced to hear his history one night, and I was curious to analyze, so far as possible, his attitude toward life and his fellows, on his re-appearance in it. That is the whole secret."

Barrington leaned back in his chair, and glanced thoughtfully at his companion.

"You know the story of his misadventures, then?" he remarked.

"I know all about his imprisonment, and the cause of it," Aynesworth answered quietly.

Barrington was silent for several moments. He felt that he was receiving but scanty encouragement.

"Is it worth while, Mr. Aynesworth?" he asked at length. "There is better work for you in the world than this."

Again Aynesworth preferred to reply by a gesture only. Barrington was watching him steadily.

"A political secretaryship, Mr. Aynesworth," he said, "might lead you anywhere. If you are ambitious, it is the surest of all stepping-stones into the House. After that, your career is in your own hands. I offer you such a post."

"I am exceedingly obliged to you,"

Aynesworth replied, "but I scarcely understand."

"I have influence," Barrington said, "which I have never cared to use on my own account. I am willing to use it on yours. You have only to say the word, and the matter is arranged."

"I can only repeat," Aynesworth said, "that I am exceedingly obliged to you, Mr. Barrington, but I cannot understand why you should interest yourself so much on my behalf."

"If you wish me to speak in plain words," Barrington said, "I will do so. I ask you to aid me as a man of honor in the restoration of those letters to my wife."

"I cannot do it," Aynesworth said firmly. "I am sorry that you should have come to me with such an offer. It is quite out of the question."

Barrington held out his hand.

"Do not decide too hastily," he said. "Remember this: Sir Wingrave Seton had once an opportunity of putting those letters to any use he may have thought fit. He ignored it. At that time, their tenor and contents might easily have been explained. After all these years, that task would be far more difficult. I say that no man has a right to keep a woman's letters back from her years after any friendship there may have been between them is over. It is not the action of an honorable man. Sir Wingrave Seton has placed himself outside the pale of honorable men."

"Your judgment," Aynesworth answered quietly, "seems to me severe. Sir Wingrave Seton has been the victim of peculiar circumstances."

Barrington looked at his companion thoughtfully. He was wondering exactly how much he knew.

"You defend him," he remarked. "That is because you have not yet found out what manner of man he is."

"In any case," Aynesworth answered, "I am not his judge. Mr. Barrington," he added, "you must forgive me if I remind you that this is a somewhat unprofitable discussion."

A short silence followed. With Barrington it did not appear to be a silence of irresolution. He was leaning a little

forward in his chair, and his head was resting upon his hand. Of his companion he seemed for the moment to have become oblivious.

Aynesworth watched him curiously. Was he looking back through the years, he wondered, to that one brief but lurid chapter of history? Or was it his own future of which he was thinking—a future which, to the world, must seem so full of brilliant possibilities, and yet which he himself must feel to be so fatally and miserably insecure?

"Mr. Aynesworth," he said at last, "I suppose, from a crude point of view, I am here to bribe you."

Aynesworth shrugged his shoulders.

"Is it worth while?" he asked, a little wearily. "I have tried to be civil—but I have also tried to make you understand. Your task is absolutely hopeless."

"It should not be," Barrington persisted. "This is one of those rare cases in which anything is justifiable. Wingrave had his chance at the trial. He chose to keep silence. I do not praise him or blame him for that. It was the only course open to a man of honor. I maintain that his silence then binds him to silence forever. He has no right to ruin my life and the happiness of my wife by subtle threats, to hold those foolish letters over our heads, like a thunderbolt held ever in suspense. You are ambitious, I believe, Mr. Aynesworth. Get me those letters, and I will make you my secretary, find you a seat in Parliament, and anything else in reason that you will!"

Aynesworth rose to his feet. He wished to intimate that, so far as he was concerned, the interview was at an end.

"Your proposition, Mr. Barrington," he said, "is absolutely impossible. In the first place, I have no idea where the letters in question are, and Sir Wingrave is never likely to suffer them to pass into my charge."

"You have opportunities of finding out," Barrington suggested.

"And secondly," Aynesworth continued, ignoring the interruption, "whatever the right or the wrong of this mat-

ter may be, I am in receipt of a salary from Sir Wingrave Seton, and I cannot betray his confidence."

Barrington also rose to his feet. He was beginning to recognize the hopelessness of his task.

"This is final, Mr. Aynesworth?" he asked.

"Absolutely," was the firm reply.

Barrington bowed stiffly, and moved toward the door. On the threshold he paused.

"I trust, Mr. Aynesworth," he said hesitatingly, "that you will not regard this as an ordinary attempt at bribery and corruption. I have simply asked you to aid me in setting right a great injustice."

"It is a subtle distinction, Mr. Barrington," Aynesworth answered, "but I will endeavor to keep in mind your point of view."

Barrington drove straight home, and made his way directly to his study. Now that he was free from his wife's influence, and looked back upon his recent interview, he realized for the first time the folly and indignity of the whole proceeding.

He was angry that he, a man of common sense, keen-witted, and far-seeing in the ordinary affairs of life, should have placed himself so completely in a false, not to say a humiliating, position. And then, just as suddenly, he forgot all about himself, and remembered only her.

With a breath of violets, and the delicate rustling of half-lifted skirts, she had come softly into the room, and stood looking at him inquiringly. Her manner seemed to indicate more a good-natured curiosity than real anxiety. She made a little grimace as he shook his head.

"I have failed," he said shortly. "That young man is a prig."

She sighed.

"I was afraid," she said, "that he would be obstinate. Men with that color eyes always are."

"What are we to do, Ruth?"

"What can we?" she answered calmly. "Nothing but wait. He is going to America. It is a terrible country for

accidents. Something may happen to him there! Do go and change your things, there's a dear, and look in at the Westinghams' for me for an hour. We'll just get some supper and come away."

"I will be ready in ten minutes," Barrington answered. He understood that he was to ask no questions—nor did he. But all the time his man was hurrying him into his clothes his brain was busy weaving fancies!

CHAPTER XI.

Mr. Sinclair, or, as he preferred to be called, Professor Sinclair, waved a white kid glove in the direction of the dancing-hall.

"This way, ladies and gentlemen!" he announced. "A beautiful valse just about to commence. Tickets, if you please! Ah! glad to see you, Miss Cullingham! You'll find—a friend of yours inside!"

There was a good deal of giggling as the girls came out from the little dressing-room and joined their waiting escorts, who stood in a line against the wall, mostly struggling with refractory gloves.

Mr. Sinclair, proprietor of the West Islington Dancing Academy, and host of these little gatherings—for a consideration of eighteen pence—did his best, by a running fire of conversation, to set every one at their ease. He wore a somewhat rusty frock coat, black trousers, a white dress waistcoat, and a red tie. Evening dress was not *de rigueur*! The money at the door, and that every one should behave as ladies and gentlemen, were the only things insisted upon.

Mr. Sinclair's best smile and most correct bow were suddenly in evidence.

"Mademoiselle Violet!" he exclaimed to a lady who came in alone, "we are enchanted. We feared that you had deserted us. There is a young gentleman inside who is going to be made very happy. One shilling change, thank you. Won't you step into the cloak-room?"

The lady shook her head.

"If you don't mind, Mr. Sinclair,"

she said, "I would rather keep my hat and veil on. I can only stay for a few minutes. Is Mr. Richardson here, do you know? Ah! I can see him."

She stepped past the professor into the little dancing-hall. A young lady was pounding upon a piano, a boy at her side was playing the violin. A few couples were dancing, but most of the company was looking on. The evening was young, and Mr. Sinclair, who later on officiated as M. C., had not yet made his attack upon the general shyness.

The lady known as Mademoiselle Violet paused and looked around her. Suddenly she caught sight of a pale, anemic-looking youth, who was standing apart from the others, lounging against the wall. She moved rapidly toward him.

"How do you do, Mr. Richardson?" she said, holding out her hand.

He started, and a sudden rush of color streamed into his cheeks. He took her hand awkwardly, and he was almost speechless with nervousness.

"I don't believe you're at all glad to see me!" she remarked.

"Oh, Miss Violet!" he exclaimed. He would have said more, but the words stuck in his throat.

"Can we sit down somewhere?" she said. "I want to talk to you."

There were one or two chairs placed behind a red drugget curtain, where adventurous spirits led their partners later in the evening. They found a place there, and the young man recovered his power of speech.

"Not glad to see you!" he exclaimed almost vehemently. "Why, what else do you suppose I come here for every Thursday evening? I never dance; they all make game of me, because they know I come here on the chance of seeing you again. I'm a fool! I know that! You just amuse yourself here with me, and then you go away, back to your friends—and forget! And I hang about round here like the silly ass that I am!"

"My dear—George!"

The young man blushed at the sound of his first name. He was mollified despite himself.

"I suppose it's got to be the same thing all over again," he declared resignedly. "You'll talk to me and let me be near you—and make a fool of me all round; and then you'll go away, and Heaven knows when I'll see you again! You won't let me take you home, you won't tell me where you live, or who your friends are. You do treat me precious badly, Miss Violet."

"This time," she said quietly, "it will not be the same. I have something quite serious to say to you."

"Something serious—you? Go on!" he exclaimed in excitement.

"Have you found another place yet?"

"No. I haven't really tried. I have a little money saved, and I could get one to-morrow if——"

She stopped him with a smiling gesture.

"I don't mean that—yet," she said.

"I wanted to know whether it would be possible for you to go away for a little time, if some one paid all your expenses."

"To go away!" he repeated blankly. "What for?"

Mademoiselle Violet leaned a little near to him.

"My mistress asked me yesterday," she said, "if I knew any one who could be trusted who would go away, at a moment's notice, on an errand for her."

"Your mistress?" he repeated. "You really are a lady's maid, then, are you?"

"Of course!" she answered impatiently. "Haven't I told you so before? Now what do you say? Will you go?"

"I dunno," he answered thoughtfully. "If it had been for you, I don't know that I'd have minded. I ain't fond of traveling."

"It is for me," she interrupted hastily. "If I can find her any one who will do what she wants she will make my fortune. She has promised. And then——"

"Well, and then?"

Mademoiselle Violet looked at him thoughtfully.

"I should not make any promises," she said demurely, "but things would certainly be different."

The young man's blood was stirred.

Mademoiselle Violet stood to him for the whole wonderful world of romance, into which he had peered dimly from behind the counter of an Islington emporium.

Her low voice—so strange to his ears after the shrill chatter of the young ladies of his acquaintance—the mystery of her coming and going, all went to give color to the single dream of his unimaginative life.

Apart from her, he was a somewhat vulgar, entirely commonplace young man, of saving habits, and with some aptitude for business in a small way.

He had been well on his way to become a small but successful shop-keeper, thereby realizing the only ideals which had yet presented themselves to him, when Mademoiselle Violet had unconsciously intervened. Of what might become of him now he had no clear conception himself.

"I'll go!" he declared.

Mademoiselle Violet's eyes flashed behind her veil. Her fingers touched his for a moment.

"It is a long way," she said.

"I don't care," he answered valiantly.

"To—America."

"America!" he gasped. "But—is this a joke, Miss Violet?"

She shook her head.

"Of course not! America is not a great journey."

"But it will cost——"

She laughed softly.

"My mistress is very rich," she said. "The cost does not matter at all. You will have all the money you can spend—and more."

He felt himself short of breath, and bereft of words.

"Gee whiz!" he murmured.

They sat there in silence for a few moments. A promenading couple put their heads behind the screen, and withdrew to the sound of feminine giggling. Outside, the piano was being thumped to the tune of a popular polka.

"But what have I got to do?" he asked.

"To watch a man who will go out by the same steamer as you," she answered. "Write to London, tell me

what he does, how he spends his time, whether he is ill or well. You must stay at the same hotel in New York, and try and find out what his business is there. Remember, we want to know, my mistress and I, everything he does."

"Who is he?" he asked. "A friend of your mistress?"

"No," she answered shortly; "an enemy. A cruel enemy—the cruelest enemy a woman could have!"

The subdued passion of her tone thrilled him. He felt himself bewildered—in touch with strange things. She leaned a little closer toward him, and that mysterious perfume, which was one of her many fascinations, dazed him with its sweetness.

"If you could send home word," she whispered, "that he was ill, that anything had happened to him, that he was not likely to return—our fortunes would be made—yours and mine."

"Stop!" he muttered. "You—phew! it's hot here!"

He wiped the perspiration recklessly from his forehead with a red silk handkerchief.

"What made you come to me?" he asked. "I don't even know the name of your mistress."

"And you must not ask it," she declared quietly. "It is better for you not to know. I came to you because you were a man, and I knew that I could trust you."

Her flattery sank into his soul. No one else had ever called him a man. He felt himself capable of great things. To think that, but for the coming of this wonderful Mademoiselle Violet, he might even now have been furnishing a small shop on the outskirts of Islington with collars and ties and gloves designed to attract the youth of that populous neighborhood.

"When do I start?" he asked, with a coolness which surprised himself.

She drew a heavy packet from the recesses of the muff she carried.

"All the particulars are here," she said—"the name of the steamer, the name of the man, and money. You will be told where to get more in New York, if you need it."

He took it from her mechanically. She rose to her feet.

"You will remember," she said, looking into his eyes.

"I ain't likely to forget anything you've said to-night," he answered honestly. "But look here! Let me take you home—just this once! Give me something to think about."

She shook her head.

"I will give you something to hope for," she whispered. "You must not come a yard with me. When you come back it will, perhaps—be different."

He remained behind the partition, gripping the packet tightly. Mademoiselle Violet took a hasty adieu of Mr. Sinclair, and descended to the street. She walked for a few yards, and then turned sharply to the left. A hansom, into which she stepped at once, was waiting there. She wrapped herself hastily in a long fur coat which lay upon the seat, and thrust her hand through the trap-door.

"St. Martin's Schoolroom!" she told the cabman.

Apparently Mademoiselle Violet combined a taste for philanthropy with her penchant for Islington dancing-halls. She entered the little schoolroom, and made her way to the platform, dispensing many smiles and nods among the audience of the concert, which was momentarily interrupted for her benefit. She was escorted on to the platform by a young and earnest-looking clergyman, and given a chair in the center of the little group who were gathered there.

At the conclusion of the song the clergyman expressed his gratification to the audience that a lady with so many calls upon her time, such high social duties, should yet find time to show her deep interest in their welfare by this most kind visit. After which, he ventured to call upon Lady Barrington to say a few words.

CHAPTER XII.

In some respects the voyage across the Atlantic was a surprise to Aynsworth. His companion seemed to have

abandoned, for the time, at any rate, his habit of taciturnity. He conversed readily, if a little stiffly, with his fellow-passengers. He divided his time between the smoke-room and the deck, and very seldom sought the seclusion of his stateroom. Aynsworth remarked upon this change one night as the two men paced the deck after dinner.

"You are beginning to find more pleasure," he said, "in talking to people."

Wingrave shook his head.

"By no means," he answered coldly. "It is extremely distasteful to me."

"Then why do you do it?" Aynsworth asked bluntly.

Wingrave never objected to being asked questions by his secretary. He seemed to recognize the fact that Aynsworth's retention of his post was due to a desire to make a deliberate study of himself, and while his own attitude remained purely negative, he at no time exhibited any resentment or impatience.

"I do it for several reasons," he answered. "Firstly, because misanthropy is a luxury in which I cannot afford to indulge. Secondly, because I am really curious to know whether the time will ever return when I shall feel the slightest shadow of interest in any human being. I can only discover this by affecting a toleration for these people's society, which I can assure you, if you are curious about the matter, is wholly assumed."

Aynsworth shrugged his shoulders.

"Surely," he said, "you find Mrs. Travers entertaining?"

Wingrave reflected for a moment.

"You mean the lady with a stock of epigrams, and a green veil?" he remarked. "No. I do not find her entertaining."

"Your neighbor at table, then—Miss Packe?"

"If my affections have perished," Wingrave answered grimly, "my taste, I hope, is unimpaired. The young person who travels to improve her mind, and fills up the gaps by reading

Baedeker on the places she hasn't been to, fails altogether to interest me."

"Aren't you a little severe?" Aynesworth remarked.

"I suppose," Wingrave answered, "that it depends upon the point of view—to use a hackneyed phrase. You study people with a discerning eye for good qualities. Nature—and circumstances—have ordered it otherwise with me. I see them through darkened glasses."

"It is not the way to happiness," Aynesworth said.

"There is no highroad to what you term happiness," Wingrave answered. "One holds the string and follows into the maze. But one does not choose one's way. You are perhaps more fortunate than I that you can appreciate Mrs. Travers' wit, and find my neighbor who has done Europe attractive. That is a matter of disposition."

"I should like," Aynesworth remarked, "to have known you fifteen years ago."

Wingrave shrugged his shoulders.

"I fancy," he said, "that I was a fairly average person—I mean that I was possessed of an average share of the humanities. I have only my memory to go by. I am one of those fortunate persons you see who have realized an actual reincarnation. I have the advantage of having looked out upon life from two different sets of windows. By the by, Aynesworth, have you noticed that unwholesome-looking youth in a serge suit there?"

Aynesworth nodded.

"What about him?"

"I fancy that he must know—my history. He sits all day long smoking bad cigarettes and watching me. He makes clumsy attempts to enter into conversation with me. He is interested in us for some reason or other."

Aynesworth nodded.

"Shocking young bounder!" he remarked. "I've noticed him myself."

"Talk to him some time, and find out what he means by it," Wingrave said. "I don't want to find my biography in the American newspapers. It might interfere with my operations there.

Here's this woman coming to worry us! You take her off, Aynesworth! I shall go in the smoking-room."

But Mrs. Travers was not so easily to be disposed of. For some reason or other, she had shown a disposition to attach herself to Wingrave.

"Please put me in my chair," she said to him, holding out her rug and cushion. "No! not you, Mr. Aynesworth. Mr. Wingrave understands so much better how to wrap me up. Thanks! Won't you sit down yourself? It's much better for you out here than in the smoking-room—and we might go on with our argument."

"I thought," Wingrave remarked, accepting her invitation after a moment's hesitation, "that we were to abandon it!"

"That was before dinner," she answered, glancing sideways at him. "I feel braver now."

"You are prepared," he remarked, "for unconditional surrender?"

She looked at him again. She had rather nice eyes, quite dark and very soft, and she was a great believer in their efficacy.

"Of my argument?"

He did not answer her for a moment. He had turned his head slightly toward her, and though his face was, as usual, expressionless, and his eyes cold and hard, she found, nevertheless, something of meaning in his steady regard. There was a flush in her cheeks when she looked away.

"I am afraid," she remarked, "that you are rather a terrible person."

"You flatter me," he murmured. "I am really quite harmless."

"Not from conviction, then, I am sure," she remarked.

"Perhaps not," he admitted. "Let us call it from lack of enterprise! The virtues are all very admirable things, but it is the men and women with vices who have ruled the world. The good die young because there is no useful work for them to do. No really satisfactory person, from a moral point of view, ever achieved greatness!"

She half closed her eyes.

"My head is going round," she mur-

mured. "What an upheaval! Fancy Mephistopheles on a steamer!"

"He was, at any rate, the most interesting of that little trio," Wingrave remarked, "but even he was a trifle heavy."

"Do you go about the world preaching your new doctrines?" she asked.

"Not I!" he answered. "Nothing would ever make a missionary of me, for good or for evil, for the simple reason that no one else's welfare except my own has the slightest concern for me!"

"What hideous selfishness!" she said softly. "But I don't think—you quite mean it."

"I can assure you I do," he answered dryly. "My world consists of myself for the central figure, and the half-a-dozen or so of people who are useful or amusing to me. Except that the rest are needed to keep moving the machinery of the world, they might all perish, so far as I was concerned."

"I don't think," Mrs. Travers said softly, "that I should like to be in your world."

"I can very easily believe you," he answered.

"Unless," she remarked tentatively, "I came to convert!"

He nodded.

"There is something in that," he admitted. "It would be a great work, a little difficult, you know."

"All the more interesting!"

"You see," he continued, "I am not only bad, but I admire badness. My wish is to remain bad—in fact, I should like to be worse if I knew how. You would find it hard to make a start. I couldn't even admit that a state of goodness was desirable."

"Do you know," she said, "I am almost sorry that I ever knew you?"

He shook his head.

"You can't mean it," he declared.

"Why not?"

"I have done you the greatest service one human being can render another. I have saved you from being bored."

"That may be true," she admitted.

"But can you conceive no worse state in the world than being bored?"

"There is no worse state," he answered dryly. "I was bored once," he added, "for ten years or so; I ought to know."

"Were you married?" she asked.

"Not quite so bad as that," he answered. "I was in prison!"

She turned a startled face toward him.

"Nonsense!"

"It is perfectly true," he said coolly.

"Are you horrified?"

"What did you do?" she asked in a low tone.

"I killed a man."

"Purposely?"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"He attacked me. I had to defend myself."

She said nothing for several moments.

"Shall I go?" he asked.

"No. Sit still," she answered. "I am frightened of you, but I don't want you to go away. I want to think. Yes, I can understand you better now. Your life was spoiled."

"By no means," he answered. "I am still young. I am going to make up for those ten years."

"You cannot," she answered. "The years can carry no more than their ordinary burden of sensations. If you try to fill them too full, you lose everything."

"I shall try what I can do," he remarked calmly.

She rose abruptly.

"I am afraid of you to-night," she said. "I am going down-stairs. Will you give my rug and cushion to the deck-steward? And—good night."

She gave him her hand, but she did not look at him, and she hurried away a little abruptly.

Wingrave yawned, and, lighting a cigar, strolled up and down the deck. A figure loomed out of the darkness and almost ran into him. It was the young man in the serge suit. He muttered a clumsy apology and hurried on.

The Day of the Dog

By Bertrand W. Sinclair

Shakespeare's "man, proud man, drest in a little brief authority," existed long before the Bard of Avon, and, more's the pity, he is still with us. Through a wise dispensation of providence, however, retribution usually overtakes such people sooner or later, as in Mr. Sinclair's story



O'HARA was a squat-built nonentity, an insignificant unit in Mike Grogan's riprap gang. Mike first took note of him because he did not seem to mind being sworn at occasionally, and when things went wrong it was necessary to Mike's peace of mind to revile some one with fantastic oaths.

The common run of laborers on his extra gang generally resented this by throwing down their tools and walking off. Sometimes one even broke the monotony by trying to teach Mike with his fists the unwisdom of profanity; either way Mike lost men, and when a railroad gang changes its entire personnel every month or so it can't be relied upon to do decent work—which fact brought sternly official letters from the roadmaster to Mike.

He was puzzled when he first discovered that his blasphemous tirades had little effect on O'Hara, a stolid plodder; but when he realized that here was a ready-to-hand escape-valve for his ugliness he promptly elevated O'Hara to the position of "straw-boss," and cursed him unremittingly whenever his swinish nature urged. Mike never knew that at such time only the urgent need of a feeble mother saved his head from the weight of a crowbar.

Years of railroading had made an efficient track-man of O'Hara, and he took his new duties as a matter of course. It was an anomalous position, that of "straw-boss"; slightly increased pay, but little authority or responsibility—

mostly a buffer between Mike Grogan and the brawny-muscled sons of many nations who toiled on the railroad, placing the thick layer of broken stones on the sloping bank of the river to keep the current from washing away the earth. And O'Hara, for the need of his mother, accepted the extra dollars as interest on the abuse, storing up the principal in bitterness of heart.

At first the men held him in contempt, observing his meekness under the tongue-lashings of Mike.

"Sure I'd jab a spike-maul down his dirty throat av he'd spake t' me that way," Hod Kelly muttered to his partner as they pried a huge rock into place.

O'Hara was patiently showing them the angle at which to set it, while farther up the bank Mike, with hands sunk deep in his pockets, damned him by sections for botching the job.

O'Hara never heeded him except to remark, "All right." But when, a few days later, Carlson, a six-foot Swede, called him "Paddy ta peeg," as they drank together at Nolan's bar in Ulm, the Swede went to the Columbus Hospital for repairs; and when the Great Northern paid his bill they did not know that it was O'Hara's gnarled fist, and *not* the flying end of a breaking stone-derrick, that had fractured the Swede's jaw.

After that the gang wondered, and covertly watched to see O'Hara break loose when Mike began to rage. But his meekness continued, and their wonder grew.

It was an important piece of work that Grogan directed. A frowning

rampart of cliffs crowded the track perilously close to the river; so close that one could stand on the ties and kick cinders into the channel. Even at low water, the muddy waves beat themselves into froth on the foot of the dump.

In summer it was an even-flowing stream, stealing quietly from bend to bend, soft-footed as an Indian stalking deer; in freshet time it snarled like a wolf-pack, and the wrecking crews and bridge-gangs worked overtime. The Ulm bend was a weak spot, which the Great Northern was weary of patching, for washouts "raised Cain with dividends"—Brown, the roadmaster, said.

So while Jack Frost held the earth in firm grip, and the water-devils muttered futilely under ice bondage, Mike Grogan's men labored to buttress the foot of the clay dump with huge chunks of sandstone, and cover the higher portion with smaller pieces, neatly laid: a sloping wall of rough masonry against the coming of the spring floods.

Pay-day in March found their task nearly complete. The pay-car came upon a Saturday afternoon that was mild, soft-skied, with a warm west wind stripping away the white robes of winter, leaving the hills all nakedly brown, and eager to don the vernal garment of spring.

"Looks as if we might have a break-up soon," the pay-clerk remarked when he passed out the sheaf of checks to Mike.

"Divil the danger! Not for a wake, anyhow. An' av she comes we're ready." Mike loved to boast. "There'll be no thrack in the watter at Ulm *this* year."

O'Hara, standing under the car window, shrugged his shoulders at the words. His eyes traveled over men lifting and prying and placing down to where riprap—as the rough stones are called—met frozen river; out beyond, over far-stretching sheets of ice, now drab and sodden, flecked with glistening pools of water that mirrored the brown banks and little, fleecy-white clouds above.

O'Hara knew the river and its pow-

er, for he had seen it in many moods. His mind became a hazy panorama of strangely twisted steel bridges, of stone piers engulfed and wooden trestles swept away. He felt that Mike underestimated the river, and was poignantly resentful; some day Mike would know the folly of holding strong men and wide rivers in contempt.

That evening Mike distributed the checks. The men, with Sunday before them and money in their pockets, drifted by twos and threes down the track to Ulm, a scant mile, where gay saloon lights twinkled a mockery of welcome.

Only the clatter of tin dishes in the cook's shanty broke the hush that fell upon the camp, and that soon ceased.

On a bench before the dismantled box car that served him for office and sleeping-room Mike lounged, smoking, until the unwonted stillness of the camp filled him with sudden loneliness. Then he, too, strode away toward the twinkling lights.

O'Hara lingered in Ulm only long enough to get his mail—two letters—passing Mike with a grunt on his way back. By the light of the cook's candle he read them, a pleased smile stealing over his features for the first time in many days. Here is a paragraph over which he lingered:

So the dear man has bought a wee house and a cow and some chickens and put me a bit money in the bank—all in me own name, Michael dear. Jimmy's sorra that he niver wrote this manny a year. Ye've been a good boy till me sendin me money right along and I'm hopin ye'll come back now that ye've nobody needin every dollar ye make.

The "dear man" in his mother's letter was a brother whom the West had lured away and bound in a thrall of silence. But in the passing years the silent one had played the winning numbers on fortune's flying wheel, and now he had returned to care for his own.

O'Hara went out, and, seating himself humped-up on a rock, puffed at his pipe until it glowed in the darkness like a tiny red star.

He was emancipated; the little moth-

er was provided for. The stress of circumstance that had held him in galling bondage, that had closed his ears to abuse, was past—he blinked in the gloom, and saw himself and Mike Grogan, man to man.

Then he went away to bed and slept and dreamed that he was a king, and that he condemned Mike Grogan to stand up to his neck in the river, while grotesque river-imps danced all about, prodding him with sharp poles!

Next morning most of the men were in their places in the cheerless shanty where they ate, but Mike came not. At noon the cook went uneasily to the box car and found it locked. He gathered from one of the men that Mike was still in town.

O'Hara frowned when the cook suggested that some one ought to try and get him out—it was nothing to him. But at evening, when the hills were casting long, black shadows across the lowlands, and the peaks beyond the valley were tipped with ruddy gold, O'Hara went down the track to Ulm.

All afternoon he had watched the river. The rotting ice was bellied upward four feet in the center, with ominous cracklings. A little more pressure—then the plunging ice-squadrans would charge down-stream with a sullen, grinding roar.

So O'Hara, putting aside his personal feelings under the spur of a queer sense of responsibility, went to seek Grogan and warn him.

He found Mike in Nolan's, leaning against the bar, sans coat and hat, his shirt collar unbuttoned, to give play to the muscles of his red, bull-neck.

A hulking section-hand, with one blackened eye, and blood dripping from his nostrils, supported himself against a rickety table. Him Mike was foully blaspheming. Around the room stood other men eagerly expectant. O'Hara had come in upon the heels of a one-sided fight.

O'Hara made a diplomatic beginning; he ordered the bartender to "sit 'em up t' the b'ys." As they lined up eagerly, the section-hand stole out unnoticed. When bottle clinked against

glass, O'Hara turned to Mike and broached the subject casually.

"Looks like she might break up anny minute," he said, nodding riverward. "Crackin' an' groanin' t' beat the divil."

Mike set his glass down and looked contemptuously at O'Hara, who set his teeth together and returned the stare.

"Ye're off ye'r base," snapped Mike. "In the middle a' March? What do ye know about it, annyway?"

His attitude changed from contempt to downright hostility. The twenty-four hours' debauch had exaggerated every brutish instinct until he saw through a red haze, and his desire was to rend and destroy. His little, blood-shot eyes glared fiercely down at O'Hara.

"What do ye know about it?" he repeated hoarsely.

But O'Hara only replied calmly: "It looks that way, an' I thought I'd tell ye."

There was a moment of silence.

"Well," said O'Hara abruptly, "I'm goin' back t' camp. Anny a' ye goin' up?"

"No, dom ye; no!" Mike bellowed. "We're not goin'—an' nayther are ye, ye runt!"

Two strides, and he was between O'Hara and the door, clutching in his fingers a heavy bottle he had swept from the bar.

O'Hara laughed mockingly. "Ye'd better leave me go quietly," he said, as coolly as though he were asking Mike to pass the butter. "This isn't the dump, Mike Grogan!"

Grogan's red face went purple as it came to him that O'Hara, upon whom he had vented his ill-humor daily for three months—O'Hara the meek, whom he had openly despised—was defying, even threatening, him.

He spat out a vile name, and the bottle his hand clutched whirled over O'Hara's swiftly ducked head and crashed against the wall beyond.

Then O'Hara ran at him like a mad bull, a queer little, gasping cry in his throat, and Mike went down in a corner, smashing a chair in his fall.

O'Hara stepped back, stripping off

his coat. His breast heaved, and the battle-glare shone in his blue eyes. His shoulder muscles stood out in corded bunches as Grogan got to his feet.

"I've been ye'r dog long enough," O'Hara panted. "I'll show ye, by me sowl, that I'm a man!"

They came together with the fury of wild beasts; the floor trembling under the tread of them as they dodged and rushed, smashing each other with the savageness of strong men suddenly angered, Mike ever striving for a clinch, where his ponderous weight and mighty arms would crush O'Hara till he cried for mercy. But O'Hara fought with the vicious wiliness of a wolf, escaping Grogan's rushes and battering him with swift, blood-drawing blows.

It was a whirlwind fight, and, like the whirlwind, soon ended. Mike rushed blindly with arms outspread to grasp his man; O'Hara ducked and lunged in the same movement, putting the weight of his body and the bitterness of his heart into the forward thrust of a left arm stiffened like a steel bar. His fist struck Grogan fairly over the heart, and he fell like an ox struck between the eyes with a hammer.

O'Hara waited only to see Mike sit up under the ministrations of the bartender, before walking out of the saloon and away up the track.

Within two hundred yards of camp O'Hara became conscious of a muffled tumult. He stopped to listen. It was the river; there was no mistaking the booming roar of madly hurrying water and the crunch of floating ice cakes. The spring dance of the loosed water-devils was on!

He hurried to the edge of the riprap and stood watching, dabbing absently with a cotton handkerchief at the puffy, bruised spots on his face.

While he stood there the moon came up, casting a sickly glimmer over the turbulent waters and the scurrying ice-drift. By and by it seemed to O'Hara there was a lull in the tumult; more open water and less floating ice. Yes, there certainly was less ice.

He listened, and caught a sound as of ocean surf far up the river. O'Hara

knew the sound—a jam above; a gorging of a narrow way; a temporary cessation of hostilities, as the war correspondents say. The attacking forces were blocked. Later on the jam would break. O'Hara thought he knew what would happen then—he had seen the ice go out many times.

He moved a little farther away from the track as a harsh screech and the glow of a yellow eye around a bend bespoke the Butte Express. It tore through, leaving a reek of smoke and the echo of hissing steam. O'Hara stood unmoved, patiently waiting, his eyes upon the river.

Around the bend swept a line of tossing white. Ahead of it, as a vanguard, a few monster cakes floated swiftly, sinisterly.

O'Hara, fascinated, beheld one pale, wedge-shaped giant point straight for the upper end of the riprap, saw and heard the pointed snout crash into the rock work, gouging ton-weight boulders aside as a plow turns the sod.

Then the grip of the current drew the upper end of the floe down-stream with a rending and gritting of the loosened rocks, and the tossing white line struck it with the force of ten thousand battering-rams, tearing away the floe, and with it a square rod of Mike Grogan's retaining wall.

O'Hara knew that after the first fierce onslaught of the ice-battalions there was little danger from big cakes for some time; the making and breaking of the jam had ground them into negligible fragments. But already the mischief was done. The wedge-shaped cake and the massed tons that tore it away had breached the wall, exposing the soft dirt to the swirling current—already the hungry river was gnawing ravenously, with a foamy snarl, at the vitals of the road-bed! In three or four hours, at that rate, the track would slip into the water.

With a sudden resolve O'Hara straightened up and ran to the bunk-house, threw the door open, and pounded viciously with a hammer the rail-gong that hung outside, until, by the lighting of candles and loud in-

quiries of men, he knew that all were aroused.

"Roll out, an' be ready t' bear a hand on the dump," he shouted from the doorway. "The river's tearin' out the riprap! Casey, ye take some a' the boys an' move them cars a' rock down on the main line. Oleson, ye take the torpedoes an' red glim an' flag the up-track. I'll flag below. Be spry. I'll be wid yez in a bit."

He impressed three men, taking them with him to the tool sheds, where they threw a hand-car upon the track, and the rails sang beneath the wheels between the camp and Ulm.

Bidding the men stay by the car, O'Hara hurried to Nolan's. If by fair words or physical force Mike Grogan could be compelled to understand the situation, O'Hara meant that he should—the need was great, and O'Hara was loyal to the company that paid for the labor of his hands.

When O'Hara asked for Mike in Nolan's, the bartender grinned and pointed to a recumbent form in the rear.

"Plumb laid out," he said affably. "After you dressed him down he got t' pourin' in the whisky in great shape—tryin' t' soothe his injured feelin's, I guess. He's dead t' the world just now."

O'Hara bent over Mike and shook him, but the only answer was an inaudible grunt. The breath of him in O'Hara's face was as the odor of a malt-house. He lay on his back, wrapped in a drunken stupor, no more sentient than a log.

O'Hara shook him roughly, a second and third time in vain; then, being wise in the way of drunken men, went quickly back to the hand-car, stopping a minute at the station to wire the roadmaster of the threatened danger.

Back at camp he found the men in shivering groups along the riprap, watching the river swiftly undoing months of weary work. Now and then sections of bank would slip down—*glug!* And the *plop! plop!* of falling stones came at regular intervals, as the current sucked the clay from beneath?

Casey had the cars ranged parallel

with the widening breach, four flats creaking under their loads of stone. At O'Hara's command the gang swarmed upon them like ants, and the crash of tumbling rock mingled with the guttural voice of the river.

Lantern in hand, O'Hara stood by, coolly directing. When the last car was stripped of its load they rallied to the real defense; and for the first time O'Hara was daunted by the force of the flood. Swiftly as his men—heaving and straining; great, grimy, sweat beads a-glisten on their red faces—rolled rock after rock into the opening, the swirl of water and bumping ice still ate its way into the embankment.

O'Hara called a halt. It was like dropping pebbles into a well. But he was still in the mood to fight. Something bulky and of many tons' weight was needed to block that churning hell-hole, and his eye fell blithesomely on the thing he needed—two high-walled, empty ore cars, shunted in on the riprap spur by a trainman's mistake. Forty tons of steel in bulk, all ready to his hand; needing only the willing shoulders of his men and a run down the spur to hurl them headlong into the breach.

He called to his crew, and set some to knocking away the bulkhead that checked cars at the spur rail-ends; the rest with pinch-bars and united effort backed the big cars up the spur for a flying start.

When the way was clear they shot the first car down, and it rolled fairly into the hole.

The second they brought with a rush and a cheer; and a hoarse, excited yell went up as the steel hulk plunged from the rails to the face of the riprap and canted with a mighty splash into the washout, snuggling down close beside its brother.

"Now, thin, roll the rocks behind!" shouted O'Hara in conquering ecstasy. The heavy cars, side by side, blocked the battering ice, and in a measure choked the greedy undercurrent. All he needed now was rock, high-banked against the steel buttress that stood so bravely before the river's unceasing

rage; but the supply was wofully scant for his need. O'Hara stared wistfully out the south track, far up which lay the Wolf Creek quarry—oh, for a rock train!

A firefly light came bobbing round a curve, and a few minutes later the conductor of a down freight was at O'Hara's elbow.

"Got her fixed?" he bawled. "Can you let us through?"

"Dunno. It's nip an' tuck. If we'd lots a' stone we could choke her off pretty soon," O'Hara answered. "Got any rock?" he demanded suddenly, remembering that mixed freights often took stone-cars down the line.

"Uh-huh. Six cars——"

"Glory be! Git 'em in here," O'Hara interrupted.

"——for Sun River," the conductor finished.

"I got t' have 'em." O'Hara faced him threateningly. "If that current gets around them cars an' into the dump again, it's all off with the hull thing—ye know what that means. I'll report ye for refusin' aid in 'mergency if ye don't run them cars in here."

"Well, all right—it's for company work, anyhow. You got the authority, I guess." The conductor started back for his train.

"Yes, I got the authority, I guess," O'Hara muttered, watching him go. "For an hour or two, annyway," he finished grimly.

As before, O'Hara's men swarmed upon the loaded cars, then toiled mightily on the riprap below. The gash in the stone work narrowed, and the current no longer bit away lumps of the bank. The freight pulled down to the Ulm yards, leaving O'Hara exultant, standing on the track watching the foiled water-wolves dull their teeth against his breastwork of steel and stone, his men working tirelessly, strengthening the lower edge with the tons of levied rock.

A glimmer of light was shading the eastern sky when the labored exhaust of an engine climbing a heavy grade fell

upon O'Hara's ears. He heard it slow down and stop at Ulm. After a little the whistle shrilled, and it came drumming up the track—a wrecking crew, with the roadmaster leaning out the cab window, O'Hara saw when it came to a standstill, car wheels groaning in the clutch of air-brakes. The roadmaster jumped down and hurried forward.

"Hello—she's solid!" His tones bespoke surprise. In the shifty light he could see the havoc wrought by ice and flood, and the rough work that saved the track.

O'Hara found himself addressing the man of authority without a tremor.

"The ice hit her an' loosened her up," he explained; "an' thin the watter tore it all t' the divil. I couldn't shtop it till I chucked the cyars in. That hild her—but we run out a' rock, an' she come near t' gittin' the best av us again. Thin I hild up that rock for Sun River an' shut her off—tight. I think she'll hould now."

"Good scheme, that—in a pinch. I guess we can get 'em out at low water," the roadmaster observed. He looked O'Hara carefully over. Always before he had passed him with a glance.

"Well," he went on, "I guess you're equal to the situation. There's a little washout farther down to see to—delayed me some or I'd have been here sooner. I'll have a train of rock in here right away. Fix her good and strong. And I'll send a clerk to check up and transfer accounts to you. So-long, O'Hara."

"But what about Mike—Grogan, I mane?" O'Hara stammered.

"Oh, to the devil with Mike!" the roadmaster said contemptuously, as he swung up on the caboose steps. "I'll stop down here and settle *his* hash. The operator at Ulm put me next to him. You're in charge now. So-long!"

O'Hara ordered his men to knock off work and get a bite to eat and take a rest. Then he sat down on a boulder, idly swinging his lantern, and looked with friendly eyes on the muddy river as it swept sullenly by in the gray dawn.

The Red Pope in the Yellow Palace

By George Bronson-Howard

Author of "The Girl of the Third Army," the "Norroy" Stories, Etc.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED.

Mountjoy Stuart has long believed her father dead when she receives what purports to be a message from him, saying that he is alive and prosperous in Tibet, but in poor health, and entreating her to come to him. He who brings the message claims to be M. Vailoff, a Russian, but Stanford Sansome, who is in love with the beautiful "Joy," recognizes him as Arif the Persian, one of the heads of a powerful Buddhistic society of the far East. This, together with the facts that Sansome has seen a painting of the girl in the Paris Salon, on which there was an oriental inscription which he was able to decipher, and that the girl has long been shadowed by a Chinaman known as John Moon, who wears a peculiar sort of jewelry, inspires in him the belief that the Buddhistic society has for some reason selected the girl as the bride of their leader, the Dalai Lama of Tibet, and that the letter is simply a ruse to get her into their power. Finding that he cannot dissuade the girl from going, he resolves to accompany her and her friend, Daisy La Salle. Another who plans to join the party is Sir Liang-Hiao, a friend of Sansome, and an exiled Chinese noble.

CHAPTER VIII—(Continued.)



SIR LIANG-HIAO was very silent at the breakfast-table, a te very little, as was his custom, and when he had finished did not wait for me but went up-stairs. I knocked

at his room door a little later, and found him perusing scrolls of ideographs which at my entrance he rolled up and locked up in his iron deed-box.

"Well?" said I.

"Are you ready for our interview with Monsieur Vailoff?" he asked, smiling.

A little later we drove over to the hotel in the trap, and, going within, sent up my card to Arif's room.

"He'll not dare to refuse to see you," commented Liang-Hiao. "And as for me, I wish to give our friend a little surprise."

The clerk stared at him a trifle curiously. Liang-Hiao, without reservation, was the most scrupulously at-

tired man I have ever known; and that morning he looked particularly spotless in his smartly cut morning-coat and gray trousers, with his never-failing tube-rose for a boutonniere. One would have some trouble in deciding Liang-Hiao's nationality at times.

"I beg your pardon," said the clerk. "But I think you dropped this." He had been looking with some curiosity at the gold seal-ring which Liang wore on the middle finger of his right hand; and as the seal was Chinese, the clerk had fallen into a mistake. He was holding toward him a pin with a Chinese inscription.

"The night clerk said that it was dropped by a Chinese gentleman," the clerk informed him. "And——" he hesitated.

My friend surveyed the pin with every appearance of eager gratitude. "I thank you most gratefully," said he, dropping into the tone he sometimes used with strangers, a stilted, perverted, and accented version of English. "The pin he belong to me. You are kind most."

He took the pin and put it in his pocket.

"It belongs to our friend Moon," said he in French, addressing me, and smiling in that crafty way which sometimes made me fear him. "I shall keep it, for it may be useful. It is the secret sign of the Soldiers of God. Moon is most careless, is he not?"

We had not time to argue the question of right and wrong of the matter, for, at this juncture, the clerk who had telephoned Arif's room, gave me his invitation to come up. So once again I was led into the reception-room of Arif's suite, Liang-Hiao following me.

"I," said Liang-Hiao in a low voice, surveying the room meanwhile, "will take my seat behind those curtains by the bay window, and make my entrance in the manner of the hero of melodrama. The right entrance at the right moment will do much to confuse a knave."

As he spoke, he disappeared behind the curtains, just in time not to be seen by Arif who, at that moment, entered the room in his serge clothes of yesterday. Immediately I felt the spell of his presence and the fear of him. He was so handsome an incarnation of evil. His eyes seemed to inform one insolently that his will was law; and if that fact were not conceded, he would prove it to be truth to your utmost dissatisfaction. He was as pallid as ever, and his teeth gleamed in the sunlight.

"You have come again," he said. "I had not expected to see you."

His tone was ambiguous, but I felt certain that he referred to the failure of the night before.

"You used clumsy weapons," said I boldly.

"One does not bring out Toledo blades to use against amateurs," he informed me insultingly. "Other weapons are tried to test the opponent's skill. But why do we wander to subjects concerning us not at all? Your wish, Captain Sansome?"

"Last night," said I, "you were asked to play in the open. You refused. I have come to make some arrangements for the journey we are to make."

He laughed quite naturally. "The

journey *we* are to make. I am afraid you have made me misunderstand. What do you mean?"

"I mean that on your return journey to find Miss Stuart's father, you will have the company of Miss Daisy La Salle, myself, and one other."

"Another—whom I do not know—who is this other?"

The entrance cue had been given. Never was there a better opportunity for an effective entrance. The curtains parted, and Liang-Hiao stepped forth with a charming smile of greeting on his face.

"The other," he announced blandly.

Arif turned his back deliberately and remained in that position for a full minute. Then he resumed his former position, and his face was as care-free as before.

"Now," said he, "will you present your eavesdropping friend, Captain Sansome?"

An indignant rejoinder trembled on my lips. "Play the farce along the legitimate lines of farce," said Liang-Hiao with much pleasantness. "Present the gentleman."

"Monsieur Vailoff," said I, "you no doubt have heard of Sir Liang-Hiao, whom I have the honor to present."

"Most happy," said he. They shook hands and looked steadily at one another. "But I have never heard of him before—my ignorance is to blame." He still held Liang's gaze.

"You much resemble some one I knew," said Liang. "But that aside. We have come, as my friend Sansome told you, to arrange for the voyage. It is needless to argue the matter. We hold the high cards, you see. If you refuse, we shall take great pleasure in informing the press of the affair, and offering our services to head a rival expedition which will keep yours in full view. We might add to our information some few suspicions, no doubt groundless, but still of sufficient value to keep you in the United States indefinitely. Murder as a fine art is little practised here, you know."

For some time there was silence, which Lang broke. "Come," he said

pleasantly. "It's hard, I know. You did not expect to be recognized. There was hardly a chance that you would be. But you were. As it is, we hold the game in our own hands. Be sensible and acknowledge your defeat. Tell the girl you have received a cablegram from some one with her father stating that he died while you were gone. Or else decamp without informing her to that effect. It is useless to play against us. We are conducting this little farce at present. Come!"

Arif's white fingers had been clasping and unclasping about the paper-knife that lay on the writing-table. Murder was writ plainly in his eyes. He could not trust himself to speak for some little while. Finally he answered Liang:

"I do not understand," he said, "why what you seem to know should blind you to such an extent. You have fallen into error. For some reason you have confounded me with another—from Captain Sansome's statement of last night you take me to be a person called Arif. I do not know the man. I am Adrien Vailoff, a Russian. Now, it appears that you suspect my intentions with regard to Mademoiselle Stuart. You wish to protect her. You wish to accompany her. Very well. I give consent. You shall go with us on one condition: that you make no use of the information gained while in the territory newly discovered by myself and my friend, Colonel Stuart. As for decamping, I have no such intention. If you endeavor to persuade the young lady not to go, you will fail. She has a proper love for her father."

That was his principal hold upon us. We knew that it would be useless to endeavor to open the Silver-Girl's eyes to the character of the man.

Liang-Hiao meditated. "You will take us to Colonel Stuart?" he asked.

"To clear myself from unjust suspicion—yes. But if I so consent to your going, you must promise to say nothing to the young lady which would prejudice her against her father's friend."

Liang turned to me, still smiling.

"The offer is a fair one. We realize that we must protect our own necks. Are you willing to take the risks?"

I nodded. "Then we accept your offer, Monsieur Vailoff," said Lang. "When do you sail?"

"On the *Siberia*—the twenty-fourth," he replied curtly. "We leave her at Shanghai and from there will take a river steamer to Hankow. From Hankow on, a junk will be necessary. We shall leave the junk at Suifu—and from there be carried on litters to the mountains. The rest——" He waved his hand vaguely and arose.

"I bid you good morning, gentlemen," he said. "I shall inform Miss Stuart that you accompany us." And he bowed us out very courteously.

I don't think we said anything until we had gotten out of the hotel, threaded the ranks of the automobilists; the pretty girls in gay gowns who watched, and the well-dressed men who hung about and talked to the automobilists. We looked in vain for Daisy and her charge, and finally took the path to the club-house.

"Well," said Lang presently, "we've let ourselves in for a spell of watching. We'll have to be on the *qui vive* continually now. He'll wait his opportunity, and put us out of the way. I'm rather sorry, now, that we suggested Miss La Salle. She will share our fate, you know."

I grew exasperated. "Well, why not put an end to things now? Denounce him."

"And fail to convince!" was his quiet reply. "No, that's not our cue. We'll wait, catch him in some treachery, and——"

"Well?" I demanded.

"Well, what is there to do but kill the man?" asked Liang-Hiao coolly. "All we have to do is to catch him—er—er—what do the papers call it—ah, yes! 'Red-handed.' Do you see?"

"But this junk trip?" I suggested. "That leaves us at a disadvantage."

"Of course," said he, "we'll make no junk trip. I am moderately wealthy. So are you. Miss La Salle could buy

a kingdom. Miss Stuart has a small fortune."

"Well?"

"We'll hire a steamer and man it with our own people, that's all."

The clouds cleared. I struck him on the back and squeezed his hand affectionately. "You've struck it," said I. "Now to go over and tell Daisy La Salle about the affair."

Liang-Hiao looked at me quizzically. "You don't mean to tell her——"

"I mean to tell her as little as I can. Tell a woman no more than is positively necessary. At the present time all that is necessary is to inform her that we are to go; that Arif, or Vailoff, has decided that he is not sufficient protection for Miss Stuart; and that he wishes us to accompany him. That's plain enough, isn't it?"

He nodded, and we cut across toward the little cottage. We were admitted; and a little later Daisy, in a charming morning-robe, came into the little reception-room.

"I won't apologize for my appearance, because I know I look better this way than any other," said she. "We're having breakfast. Won't you dear, delightful early callers come in and have some, too?"

We explained that we had breakfasted.

"Well, come back and have some coffee, and don't be horrid," she said. "Come along with you."

We went most obediently, and I saw my Silver-Girl again, her pink coloring and beautiful hair glowing in the sunlight. She welcomed us sweetly. I sat beside her.

"Good news," said I.

"Well, I for one am glad somebody is pleased," commented Daisy. "Here I've been ever since last night trying to convince this ungrateful girl of the perfect impossibility of making such a journey alone, and she absolutely refuses to listen to a word I say——"

"That's what we came about," I explained.

Liang-Hiao took up the narrative. "We have had a talk with Monsieur Vailoff," he said quietly; "and he has

asked that we accompany him on his return trip. He has also requested your presence, Miss La Salle. He is agreed that we are all folks of honor, who will respect the right of priority in the matter of Colonel Stuart's discoveries. We have promised him, for ourselves and for you, that no word of what he has said will reach the press."

Daisy was staring at us in open-eyed astonishment. This changed to a look of admiration and gratitude. "Why, you dear, good, clever people," she said, "you are wonderful; absolutely wonderful. Now, you see, miss," turning to the Silver-Girl, "you had to give in, after all——"

Miss Stuart looked a little dazed; but she was smiling thanks at us. "I'm very, very glad," she said, in a low tone. "I didn't want to go alone—but he said father's wishes were——" Her voice broke.

Liang went on further to explain that at Shanghai we should endeavor to charter a small steamer; but here Daisy broke in with great vivacity.

"Hire—no need to hire. It's the most fortunate thing. I got this cablegram this morning." She picked up a yellow envelope. "It's from Miller Leeds; such a dear, good boy he is, and a sort of cousin of mine. He always tells me where he is by cable"—this parenthetically. She smoothed out the cablegram:

HONGKONG, the Eighteenth.

DAISY LA SALLE, Del Monte: Arrived Hongkong this morning. Can I do anything for you here? Great voyage. Love.

MILLER.

"You bet he can do something for me!" she cried. "You see he's yachting. Bully yacht, too. Just the thing for us."

She rang for the footman, and asked for a telegraph blank. It was brought here. She detached a silver pencil from the chain about her neck, and wrote for a few minutes. Then she showed the results in a large, angular, boyish hand. It read:

MILLER LEEDS, Hongkong: Be in Shanghai harbor in time to meet the *Siberia* sixteenth proximo. Need you and yacht. Love.

DAISY.

Liang-Hiao exchanged looks with me. As plainly as the words could have been said, his look gave me to understand that nothing could suit our purposes better.

Daisy gave the message to her maid, who entered at her call, and then turned to the Silver-Girl.

"Oh, dearie! I'm so awfully, awfully glad," said she.

"So am I," said Mountjoy Stuart happily.

So was Liang-Hiao. So was I.

CHAPTER IX.

WE SURPRISE ARIF.

I doubt whether there was anything of particular interest in the making ready for the voyage. I got out my exploring-kit, and stocked up with plenty of clothes, quinin, and ammunition. For the last, I had two beautiful Luger pistols of ten chambers each, a small two-barreled Remington, and a heavy Colt .45. Something told me that I would have need of them. Also I closed up my cottage, leaving it in charge of an elderly fellow, who had acted as caretaker for me before, and whom I trusted absolutely. I might add that I made my will.

At the motor-car meet the next day Daisy drove her own car, and while she took no prizes, she was loudly commended for her skill. She told me afterward, that had it not been for the fear of injury, she would have won. "But I couldn't run any risks when I had to look after Mountjoy, could I, Stanny?"

After that she had her car sent to San Francisco for storage; and all of us went up the same day and put up at the Palace, in order to have all San Francisco to ransack for articles for traveling.

I explained the futility of taking many things, as it would be quite practicable to buy anything in the way of apparel that one might need in Shanghai. So we traveled "light," as they say in the army—that is, light considering that the women had only five trunks

apiece and a half-dozen suit-cases, portmanteaus, and other et ceteras. Liang and I were down to a steamer-trunk each, a kit-bag, and a portmanteau.

And on the twenty-second of the month we were to sail. Arif, I might add, was at the Palace alone, although he spent a good bit of his time elsewhere. I was quite sure that it was somewhere in the Chinese quarter, but I was taking no risks in going there to see. But the time he spent with the girls was well spent, for, day by day, he grew in favor with them. He was so astoundingly clever, and so infernally striking looking, that I hardly blamed them for liking him so well; although it was not particularly conducive to my peace of mind that they did.

We always contrived to be with him when he took them about the town, or, rather, they took him about, for he professed ignorance of San Francisco, and wanted to be shown places of interest. To us he was very polite, even cordial; and I must confess that I had a liking for the man. "He's such a scoundrel that it is worth while to know as much of him as he will let you know," to quote Liang-Hiao.

But it is rather foolish to dally on our stay in San Francisco. Nothing happened there which might be construed into an act of ill-faith on Arif's part; but, in spite of that, we did not relax an iota of our vigilance, nor did we get in any part of the city not well-lighted and well-policed. We were taking no chances.

Everything went off with great *éclat*; and many of Daisy's friends, and some of mine, were down at the Pacific Mail Dock to wave us a farewell when the *Siberia* steamed out. We hung over the rail of the boat-deck waving back at them until the steamer passed Angel Island and glided through the famous Golden Gate. The start was at two o'clock, and it was twilight when the cliffs of America intermingled with the gray sky-line and were lost to view. I had watched them do this twice before, once from the deck of a transport going to the Philippines, another time from just such another steamer as

this; but never had the premonition come so strongly to me that I was looking my last upon them. Perhaps something of the same kind came unconsciously to both Daisy and the Silver-Girl, for both were very silent, and said but little. We sat there in the dim twilight, the four of us. Arif had betaken himself elsewhere.

A little later the first call for dinner sounded noisily, as the Chinese saloon steward beat upon the great copper drum. Just on top of it came Arif's voice, asking us whether we intended to eat dinner or not. I must confess it jarred on me as a cold plunge or an electric massage, and had the effect of driving away melancholy and putting me on the alert again.

Liang and I shared the same cabin, and as we dressed for dinner, we were quite merry indeed. We got down—or, rather, *up*, to be strictly correct—to dinner before the girls. The chief steward had arranged us together—Arif, then Daisy La Salle; Liang next, and the Silver-Girl between Liang and myself. I might add that the donation of a five-dollar bill to that functionary had made the arrangement, for it was my suggestion that we be so placed. Whether or not Arif liked it, I don't know; but I rather think he didn't like it at all.

There was nothing particularly striking about any of our fellow passengers. There were a number of government employees—stenographers, school-teachers, bookkeepers, etc.—on their way to the Philippines; also some young fellows just graduated from minor military institutions on their way to become officers in the Philippines constabulary; some English officers returning to China by way of the States; several whisky salesmen, one of whom wore a diamond that would have served the vessel well as a search-light; two United States Army officers, who had missed their transport; and three naval officers, four wives accompanying the five; some very quiet, very well-behaved tourists, who were entirely inconspicuous, and many more tourists, who were loud and shrill in conversation.

On the whole, the passengers were about the average lot who travel first-class on any Pacific liner, which, I may add, is far from being as select as the first cabin of an Atlantic passenger ship.

All this sort of thing, however, is not particularly interesting, nor has it any great bearing on what I have to tell, for there are so many important things that happened later that it seems a waste to dilate so much on the unimportant things. I might take up lots of space telling you of the sensation created by Mountjoy's entrance into the saloon, and the frank envy with which we were regarded. But I shall stop here so far as the first night on board was concerned.

Something that I had hitherto neglected to mention is the fact that we had requested Daisy to say nothing to Arif regarding the cablegram she had sent to her cousin, Miller Leeds.

"It will be a surprise to him," said I craftily; "because he is thinking it will be necessary to take a junk up the river."

Yes, undoubtedly it would be a surprise; but not the sort of surprise that comes under the head of "pleasant"!

We had a bully trip. The weather was fair and the climate mild. We stopped at Honolulu for a day; and had dinner that night at the Alexander Young Hotel. At Yokohama the girls found Liang and myself invaluable cicerones. We had tea at the Thousand-and-one-steps pagoda, and lunch at the Palace. At Kobe we lingered but a few hours, and at Nagasaki a day and a night. There we crossed over to Mogi, over perhaps the most picturesque road in the world. We dined at the Nagasaki Hotel that night, and the next morning were well on our way to Shanghai. In due time we came to Wusung, where the big ocean-going steamers lay up because Shanghai harbor proper has not enough depth for their draft. When we had gotten our luggage together, we climbed aboard the company's launch, with its prow turned toward Shanghai.

The voyage, as I have said, had been

pleasant. Arif had made himself fairly agreeable, and had not given us too much of his company. Truth to tell, he had been forced to keep below because of the open-eyed admiration of the feminine portion of the passengers, who admired him volubly and without shame.

And, as for me—forgive me if I introduce the personal note again—that was the happiest time I had ever spent. With Mountjoy morning, afternoon, and night. Reading to her, playing deck-games with her, talking to her. Can you realize what that means to a man in love as I was? She gave me all of her company that I asked for. She enjoyed herself with me frankly, and as an open-hearted child would. She told me of her father, of her convent life, while I—I am ashamed to say—tried to make myself out a hero in her eyes by telling her of things I had had happen to me, and places I had been. The hope was growing on me that she cared for me; and I was so fearful that this might only be a fool's paradise that I feared to tell her of my love.

And you who deem a lover a frantic being blinded to the real worth of his lady, and believing her to be possessed of charms which he himself alone sees—let me tell you that if ever a man enjoyed the dislike of a great number of men, that was my position on board the *Siberia*. One and all, the unattached men looked on me with disfavor. One and all, they had tried to bring themselves into contact with Mountjoy; but we were a sufficiency in ourselves, we four, and we needed no outsiders. Daisy, it is true, held little gatherings about her continually, much to the amusement of Liang-Hiao, and, before the voyage was over, knew every one on board quite well, and called a half-score of the youths by their Christian names. But Mountjoy was shy and shrinking where strangers were concerned.

I had forgotten, however, that we were in Shanghai harbor. The launch sped on its fourteen-mile course, and we sat in the stern, bundled up, for the air was chilly. We passed the gun-

boats of different nations—coasting steamers, sailing sampans, junks, and all manner of craft, and presently the Bund of Shanghai came in sight, that most modern Bund, with its huge *godowns* (warehouses), offices, churches, consulates, hotels, and public buildings. From the different seats of the powers floated the flags of many lands, and, had it not been for the Chinese craft, it would have been hard to imagine this a Chinese city at all.

Suddenly Daisy gave a little cry of recognition. "Look!" she said. "There's the *White-Wing*!" She pointed vaguely in the direction of many boats.

"Eh?" I asked.

"The *White-Wing*," she explained. "Miller Leeds' yacht. I knew he'd be here, the dear, good boy. Now we'll have a pleasant voyage, never fear."

Arif looked politely interested. "You are leaving us here, Miss La Salle?" he queried.

Liang and I smiled at one another in unholy joy. Daisy beamed on the Persian.

"No, didn't you know? Oh, of course, it's a surprise for you. I know you'll like it. Now, we won't have to go out in that horrid junk, you see?"

Arif's face darkened.

"What do you mean?" he asked brusquely.

"I mean that Miller Leeds is going to take us up the river in his yacht. I cabled him from Del Monte to meet us here. That's his yacht—the *White-Wing*. Isn't it perfectly splendid in him?"

"Why didn't you tell me before?" asked Arif, compressing his lips.

Daisy looked at us waggishly. "Well, you see, Stanny and Sir Liang here thought it would be such a surprise for you—and it is, isn't it?"

The Persian glowered balefully at us. "Yes," said he, and walked to the other end of the launch.

"Trouble," commented Liang briefly in my ear.

I nodded just as the launch puffed into the dock. Arif came up again, and assisted the girls with their hand luggage. We were soon over the gang-

plank, and instinctively my gaze followed Arif's to the crowd of agents, customs people, rickshaw, and luggage coolies. One coolie moved forward slightly, and his eyes met Arif's meaningly. There was something familiar about the fellow, and, without thinking, I began to wonder if he had ever served me before. Just then Liang pressed my arm.

"John Moon," he whispered.

And, when I looked again, I saw that it was.

CHAPTER X.

SWORDS OUT.

We went to the Astor House, as most people do, and got there just a little while before dinner. Our rickshaw boys paid off and our hand luggage carried within, we gave directions to the luggage-clerk to bring up our heavier stuff from the dock, and then arranged for rooms.

Few people realize that in Shanghai there is to be found at least one hotel which is fully the equal of our great modern caravansaries, where one may obtain rooms with a bath, and be served in a dining-hall larger than that of either the Waldorf, of New York, the Carlton, of London, or the Palace, of San Francisco. Liang and I had a suite together.

After we had registered, Drakeford, the clerk, studied Daisy's signature.

"I think there is a letter here for you, Miss La Salle," said he.

He greeted me with effusion, for I had been at the place before.

"Here it is," he said, after rummaging through some mail; and he gave her a letter with the crest of the Hongkong Club in one corner. She excused herself and broke it open. With a sigh of disappointment, she turned to us.

"Miller's laid up with a broken leg. He's at the hospital in Hongkong and won't be out for a month more. Isn't that too disappointing?"

Arif seemed diabolically well pleased.

"But," she continued, "he's sent his yacht up, and says I'm to use it in any way I think fit, and keep it just as

long as I like. Isn't that splendid of him?"

We agreed that it was.

"Well, I'm awfully sorry I can't see him. He's just the dearest boy in the world, and I know you'd all like him." She sighed again. "Well, we can't have everything. Come, dearie." She linked her arm in Mountjoy's. "We'll see you folks at dinner, I suppose?"

We supposed so, too, and they followed the Chinese boy to their rooms. Arif turned to us.

"A moment," he said.

"Come up to the rooms," said I.

When we had tossed our luggage out of the way, we invited him to a seat, and I rang for something to drink. Liang lighted one of my cigarettes, and I did the same.

"Now," said I.

"I thought you understood," said he, those eyes of his holding a very unpleasant look, "that we were to go up the Yang-tse-Kiang in a junk which I was to hire here in Shanghai——"

Liang smiled. "Think," said he with the utmost of suavity, "how much more pleasant it will be for the ladies to travel on a well-appointed steam-yacht."

Arif checked a scowl. "It was your idea, then?"

"No," answered Liang truthfully, puffing his cigarette with great content.

There was a knock on the door, and the boy entered with the drinks. I signed the chit, and he took himself off. I poured out my bottled ale, and Liang mixed his whisky and soda.

"You won't drink?" interrogated Liang. "Oh, yes, of course, the rules of your order——"

Arif's hand came down heavily on the arm of the chair; and with great effort he held his face in composure.

"I will say, however," Liang went on, reverting to the previous conversation, "that I had suggested we hire a steamer, here in Shanghai, and man it with a crew we could trust if we paid them enough. Also to arm them. Do you think that we are fools enough to run our heads into the lion's jaws? No fear, my friend. More than that, we

intend to see that the two ladies have sufficient escort of sturdy American sailors across the country to the mountains you speak of. Try some of this whisky, won't you? It's very good——"

This time Arif did not succeed in masking his emotions. His usually pallid face was beet-red. "Very good," repeated Liang with a smile. Arif shot up from his seat and towered over us.

"Swine!" he rumbled in that basso of his. "Swine! You have tried to make a fool of me—of me——"

"My friend does not understand Persian," reminded Liang pleasantly, for Arif had forgotten himself to such an extent that he was speaking in that language.

He returned to English. "I give you warning," said he, "that you may carry your insults too far. I am a man of quick temper, and some day I may crush you, you miserable yellow man, and you, you——"

Liang was on his feet, too, and his eyes were narrowed until only the faintest speck of light was visible, reflected from them. "And what of us?" he asked coolly.

Arif disregarded him. "We will go on the junk, as I have arranged. We will have no strangers prying into this matter. If you refuse, I shall see that you do not go at all! Do not forget that you are a refugee from your country, and that your head is in danger, Liang-Hiao——"

"So you know that, eh? And yet you were never in Peking!" Liang's voice was as cutting as the cold north wind. "You are showing little astuteness, my friend. Let me tell you this. We are no fools. We know you, and know your mission. We can learn nothing from you. We have come to protect Miss Stuart, and we intend that she shall discover that you have lied to her. The yacht crew will be well armed at our instructions. If you attempt to jeopardize us, Miss La Salle shall be told the truth; and an American gunboat will keep us company up the river. Remember that she is an important person in her own country. Do not try in-

timidation, my good Arif. It does not go well with us." He snapped his fingers in the Persian's face.

The next minute, with a roar of rage, Arif had drawn a knife, and his hand darted downward. Liang avoided the blow neatly.

"Keep away," he growled, as I would have gone to his assistance.

The next minute he had circled about Arif, and they swayed together, Liang gripping the hand with the knife high in air. The little tabouret holding the glasses was knocked over, and the liquor ran on the floor. Arif's heel crunched the bottle beneath it.

How it happened I do not know, but the next thing I saw was a whirling about; and the confused mass resolved itself into Liang sitting on Arif's chest and holding that worthy by the gullet. The knife had fallen far across the room.

"Now, you Persian dog," grated Liang-Hiao, "make that attempt again, and by the graves of a thousand dead I will send your evil spirit into the howling desert." He was speaking in Chinese, and the gutturals were growled out. "We've got the game. Give up." He shook the Persian violently. Arif's eyes bulged and his tongue hung from his mouth.

I laid my hand on Liang-Hiao's shoulder.

"Let him up," said I.

In a moment Liang was as smiling as of yore. The beast fled from his face as quickly as it had come. He released Arif and arose.

"What! My whisky gone!" he said in a gentle, reproving tone. "Ring for a boy."

Arif got up and began to dust off his clothes. There was a dead silence. Presently the boy rapped again.

"There was an accident," said Liang in Chinese. "Take away the stuff and bring some more. And show this gentleman to his room. It is No. 73." He crossed the room and picked up the knife, a highly ornate affair, enameled in various colors and ornamented with dragons.

"I'll keep this as a souvenir," he said

in English. "No. 73, boy. Good evening, Monsieur Vailoff. We will see you at dinner, I suppose."

The Persian looked at him, deadly cold. His eyes were as malevolent as those of a snake's, his head upraised to strike. He went out of the room without a word.

"First innings for us," smiled Liang—"to adopt your picturesque American metaphor."

But I was far from feeling at ease. Something weighed on me. I had seen John Moon; I asked Liang about him.

"He was probably sent away the very day that we decided to go with Arif. Went straight to Vancouver and caught a Canadian Pacific liner, I suppose. Meanwhile he has been plotting mischief for us here in Shanghai. I have no doubt that he had selected the junk and manned it with rascals of his own caliber, all belonging to this secret order in which he holds high office, and every one of whom he controls body and soul. But we've checkmated that move, and his work has been for nothing."

He smiled again in that peculiarly provoking and superior way he had. "So we drew Arif, after all," he said. "I had been hoping for it for some time."

Amazed, I looked at him. "Why under the sun should you wish to make him more of an enemy than he is?"

"I had imagined him a monument of repression, a colossal petrification. He has shown us his human side. Oh! it is a joy to study the human side," cackled my friend Liang-Hiao.

I liked him least in this mood, and set about preparing for dinner. Liang took himself into the next room, and began to unpack his traps. We held no conversation, and the silence was almost unbroken except for a few profane remarks from me when I found my last two dress-shirts somewhat rumpled. Presently Liang joined me in his dinner clothes, and we locked the suite as we went out.

"Suppose we knock for the ladies," suggested Liang, which, after traversing a labyrinth of red-carpeted passages,

we finally did. Daisy La Salle's voice from within informed us that they would be down presently, so we went below and waited for them in the hotel foyer.

There were quite a few people there, most of whom were attired for the evening, some smoking, some reading the *North China Daily News*, or some of the batch of newspapers and magazines which our steamer had brought in from the States.

The arrival of the mail steamers is always somewhat of an event in the coast cities of China, not only because each one brings new people to enliven the place, but because they are the connecting-link between the civilization of China and the other worlds. By them come the letters from home-folks, the latest fashions in clothes, and, perhaps best of all, those very same newspapers and magazines that I have mentioned.

It is pitifully amusing to see an exile poring over a copy of a New York or London paper at least a month old, with the knowledge that back where it was printed its contents have been utterly forgotten even by those who brought it out.

One man I noted particularly. He was attired in dinner clothes of a nautical cut, with the insignia of captain on his sleeves. He was eyeing us with some intentness; and presently he leaned over and asked Drakeford, the clerk of the hotel, something which I did not catch. By his coming directly toward us it was to be inferred that he had inquired concerning us.

"Excuse me," he said with the twang of a Down-Easter. "I guess you're the friends of Miss Daisy La Salle, ain't you? I'm waiting to see her. Can you tell me when she'll be down?"

I gave him my card. "We're waiting for her and Miss Stuart," said I. "She'll be down—presently. You know what a woman's 'presently' is!"

He thrust my card into his waistcoat pocket, and felt for something. "Haven't got one, Mr. Sansome," said he. "But my name's Bowker—L. G. Bowker, at your service, and in command of the *White-Wing*—Mr. Leeds'

yacht, you know." He tugged at his brown beard nervously. "I don't want to spoil a good dinner, but——"

"Right, captain," said I, and presented Liang. "Save your bad news until we've dined—and you'll make another of the party, I'm sure, won't you?"

He acceded with some doubt. "This is mighty important," said he.

"Can't it wait?" I asked.

He said that it could. At that moment Daisy and my Silver-Girl trailed toward us; and we brought up Captain Bowker and made him known. Daisy was most gracious, and soothed down the captain, who had grown more nervous than before, and tugged his beard at frequent intervals.

We went into the dining-hall, where Boy No. 1—as the head waiter is called in China—came toward us with many bows and smiles.

"Claptain Sansome," said he, recognizing me with another genuflection. "You look more well than when I see you last time, mebbe—for five?"

"Six," corrected Daisy. "Monsieur Vailoff?" turning to me reproachfully.

"Six. Velly well, can do." And he led us the length of the room, and gave us a table near the fountain. We ordered dinner; and some wine. Vailoff did not come.

It was hard to believe that we were out of the United States. The long, wide, high-ceilinged room, with the snowy white tables and pink-shaded candles, the men in evening clothes, the women in low-cut bodices, the string orchestra above us on a little balcony rendering familiar airs. It was one of the famous Fridays at the Astor House where Shanghai society turns out in full, and dines at the big hostelry.

In the center of the room was a huge bronze figure set among rocks and stones, water spurting from its mouth and ears, and tinkling on the pebbles of the basin. Here and there on the figure were little electric bulbs, red, blue, and green, over which the water gurgled opalescently.

We had a very satisfactory dinner

indeed, and a dinner served noiselessly and promptly by two of the felt-soled, deft-handed Celestials, who flew along the room, their cues streaming and their eyes alert. These, the waiters, were the only thing to remind one of China. The dinner itself was such as might have been had anywhere in Europe or America if one paid double the price.

We finished, and were smoking, sipping coffee the while; that is to say, the three men were smoking. Bowker had gotten over his uneasiness as he gorged himself, but now that he had nothing to do but listen to the music and watch us, he began to toy with his watch-chain. Then he said:

"When were you thinking of using the yacht, Miss La Salle?"

Daisy replied quite graciously that she had every intention of coming aboard to-morrow, and so had the rest of us. "We'll start early the morning after," said she.

"Begging your pardon, we can't," said the sailor.

The Chicago girl stared. "Eh?"

Again a feeling of uneasiness came over me. What new development was this?

"You can't start, miss, because just an hour ago the ship came near being blown up," he said. "Caught a sneaking Chink at it, and turned him over to the police. If he'd 'a' gone on, we'd all been blown galley-west. As it was, he only succeeded in doing for a piston-rod and an escape-valve or so—enough to lay us up for three or four days."

"How provoking!" cried Daisy.

I looked at Liang, and Liang looked at me. As plainly as saying it, our eyes reflected the same thing, and the thing was: "Arif's at it again."

In truth, he was not an easy man to play against.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PERSIAN WINS.

So we had to remain four days in Shanghai. Under ordinary circumstances, Shanghai is a most delightful

place; but under these particular ones, it was somewhat intolerable.

We were in a continual agony of doubt and fear whenever Daisy and the Silver-Girl made up their minds to do a bit of exploring and shopping; and we privately engaged six stalwart sailors out of a billet to follow us wherever we went.

Did I pause to describe each in detail, the many accidents that befell us in the Paris of the Orient would go to make up a fair-sized volume in themselves.

Once my rickshaw man stumbled against Liang-Hiao's, throwing both of us out and in front of a chaise and pair, bowling along at a very rapid rate. Only the quick eye of the driver saved us. He veered aside, and we got up unharmed and very dusty. The rickshaw men declared it to be an accident; and, of course, we could do nothing—that is, nothing save refuse to engage them again.

A second time, in the filth of the Chinese city, we were buying some bamboo carvings when the dealer chose to become vociferous. A gesticulating crowd of Chinese surrounded us, and some missiles were thrown. Daisy was calm, but the Silver-Girl went white as a lily. At this moment our sailormen burst through the crowd, and, forming about us in a circle, cowed the mob with revolvers. We got out of the Chinese city with all despatch.

Again, passing a house in the process of building, several bricks fell, and one grazed my shoulder. We dashed into the place, and found it deserted, it being the noon meal-hour and the workmen gone. And yet once more, when in a sampan returning from the U. S. S. *Monadnock*, the boat was overturned and we were left to swim ashore as best we could. It was lucky that both Liang and I were good swimmers, for it was a choppy day, and the waves were rather high.

We held counsel with Captain Bowker, informing him of the fact that there were parties opposed to our achieving the ends of exploration which we desired, and warned him that he had bet-

ter arm his sailors with revolvers, which we offered to buy. But Bowker, grim old sea-dog, informed us that he had revolvers in plenty in the yacht's arsenal, and that he would deal out one to each man with instructions to use it if necessary.

"I'm a peaceful American, sir," he informed me. "I ain't looking for trouble; but if any blasted son of a bilge-keel stops me in my dooty, I'm his man for a leetle row. That's me. That's the kind of a man I am, sir."

At our advice he paid off the Chinese in the crew, and turned them adrift, taking on in their places the six sailors who had served as our escort in the city. It is not that I dislike Chinese. On the other hand, I have the greatest regard for them; but I knew that no Celestial was to be trusted where Arif and his official powers of intimidation were concerned. Liang had explained to me in detail that Arif, by virtue of his high office in the different secret orders, was at liberty to commandeer the services of half the population of China. The men might be peaceful enough and have no grudge against the white men, but Arif's word turned them into thugs for the moment.

During the days in question, Arif spent but little of his time with us, and was often absent from meals. He seemed more absorbed and self-centered than he had been before, and was irritable in the extreme at times; but at others he would veer in the opposite direction and become the devoted cavalier of the girls. He proposed many expeditions out the Bubbling Well Road and thereabouts; but we distrusted him alone with them, and took good care that whenever he saw fit to accompany them, we should be along also.

In short, our time in Shanghai was one period of nervous tension and excitement. We slept but little; and I drank considerably more than was good for me in order to keep my nerves steady, so that when finally the yacht was patched up and we crawled aboard one night, I praised the Fates most devoutly, and turned in for a good night's rest.

The next morning when I awoke we were moving up the yellow Yang-tse at a smart clip. I turned out early and had a cup of coffee and some toast served me on deck. As I smoked my cigarette later, leaning over the rail, Arif came up and joined me. It was the first time we had been alone together since the encounter he had had with Liang-Hiao.

"Well, devoted chevalier of dames," he said in a somewhat mocking voice, "are you at last satisfied with my good faith? Do you not now regret that you have insulted me so many times? Eh—do you not?"

"I don't see why I should," I informed him.

He looked hurt at my ingratitude. "Have I not given in to you at every turn? Are you not on your friend's yacht? What chance is there for treachery—eh?"

I smiled at him triumphantly. "No chance at all," I informed him vain-gloriously. "The sailors are armed, and have directions to use their weapons. I trust you now because there is no possible way in which you can do harm. Your fangs have been drawn."

He grinned evilly at me. "Am I then a snake, that you speak of fangs?"

"Somewhat—except that the snakes in my country do give warning when they intend to strike."

His grin disappeared. "They are foolish snakes," he said, and took himself off.

He discovered a new way to annoy me; and that was by continually sticking to the side of the Silver-Girl, when I would far rather he had left us twain alone. I was near to deciding that the propitious time had come for declaring myself to her, and wanted the opportunity. But Arif evidently saw my intentions, and played a little game of checkmate himself.

We passed Kiang-yin, the fortress with the big guns showing their black muzzles at us from the white sides of the fort. "Shade of the River" is this fortress called, but where the shade comes in I was not able to discover.

I mention it, for it was the only point of interest that lay between Shanghai and Nanking, which was our first stop. Here we laid in some fresh meats and eggs, and continued on our way.

One hardly travels up the Yang-tse for the beauty of the scenery. Indeed, there was little to see. The same endless monotony met our eyes—brown plains, nipped with frost, and threaded by many small canals, running like threads of silver through gold. Sparse vegetation sprang up here and there, and occasionally a live-oak, a "tung-shu"—the wood-oil tree, which affords shelter beneath its umbrageous branches—perhaps now and then a rhododendron or a yew-tree might be seen. The country was as flat as a billiard-table, but occasionally, shining through the mist, one seemed to see mountains in the distance.

So we plowed up that chocolate-colored stream, paying very little attention to the beauties(?) of nature. Time did not hang heavily on my hands. I had my glorious girl to see, to hear, to sometimes touch when her hand met mine in a good-night parting.

Daisy La Salle played bridge with Liang-Hiao, Arif, and the first mate—a very passable youngster named Raines. Sometimes she insisted on going on the bridge, and taking the sun with the sextant, or whatever they use for that purpose. She was very annoying to the captain; but a joy for the first, second, and third officers, who hung about her wistfully. I must say she was very good to each and every one of them.

Arif still gave the Silver-Girl and myself enough of his company to make me wish that I might tumble him overboard.

In this manner we passed "The City of Nine Rivers," which is Kiukiang, the metropolis of the River Hankow; later Yochow, Shasi, and came to Ichang to lay in some more provisions.

I cannot blame myself too much when I remember that we relaxed our vigilance to a certain extent. We were so sure that we had Arif cornered, so sure that he had not a chance to play his

cards, that I, for one, began to look on him with a certain pity as one who has fought a good fight and lost it. Liang-Hiao refused to converse with me on possibilities; but I do remember that he was not so sanguine as I, and bade me once or twice to remember that the game was far from being at an end.

"We have not reached Suifu yet," said he. Suifu was the place where we were to land. "If Arif persists in his intention, and we leave the yacht with perhaps twenty sailors as a guard, can we hope to prevail against the hordes that Arif can summon to his aid?"

I laughed at him. "We shall not leave at Suifu."

He looked very tolerant. "Have you persuaded Miss Stuart to that effect?" he asked. "Because never a sun sets that she does not remark that it brings her another day nearer to her father."

"Don't borrow trouble," I urged, and went away whistling, ass that I was!

At Ichang a British resident named Coakley swung aboard and had breakfast with us. He proved to be a very agreeable fellow, and told us much of interest about the country.

"You've got a blessed bad passage before you, you know," said he. "The rapids up this way are pretty bad."

We steamed off at eleven o'clock and soon entered the Gorge of Ichang, where great perpendicular cliffs arise from the water to any height from eight hundred to four thousand feet. Here and there we churned through little rapids, and noted temples built on the sides of the cliffs where foundation was offered—"to propitiate the river gods," Liang-Hiao explained.

The scenery here was well worth seeing, and reminded me somewhat of the Grand Cañon of the Colorado. By and by we struck the real rapids, and the yacht had somewhat of a time breasting the swirling, foaming waves. The vessel rocked and trembled from one end to the other, but finally we were through it all; and when we went down to dinner were in comparatively smooth water.

Arif did not accompany the Silver-

Girl and myself to the deck. We were allowed to be alone for once. I did not realize then that the days to come would hold such bitter-sweet memories of that night—the last I had with her for many weary, waiting days.

I bundled her up in her rug and arranged her steamer-chair for her. We sat there in the light of the moon. I can see her now, her sweet face turned toward me, her glorious hair bathed in the moonlight.

"Joy," I said, for I called her that now. "You are very, very beautiful."

"Why do you always tell me that?" she asked. Her eyes questioned mine, her mouth was sweetly petulant. The blood leaped and rushed to my head. My fingers tingled.

"I love you, Joy," I said.

She was very quiet for awhile, and I realized my temerity. I looked away from her, and presently hid my face in my hands. Her soft, warm, little hand was stretched out and caressed my hair.

"Stanford, my friend," she said.

We looked at one another. The sweet mouth was vaguely perturbed, her eyes troubled.

"Why do you say that, Stanford?" she asked.

"Why?" I cried, holding the little hand between both of mine and gaining a new courage from the pressure of it. "Why? Because you're all in all to me. Because I want you always. Because I'm incomplete without you. Because life is not life without you. I want you for my wife, dearest Silver-Girl."

"Your wife?"

We sat silent, and I was very happy, although she had said nothing as yet to make me so.

"You see, I haven't known about it being this way," she began presently. "But you—I suppose I thought we'd go on this way always. I didn't realize what it would be to be without you."

"Dearest," I cried; and my arm stole about her. Her eyes closed and her lips trembled as I bent over her.

As I did so the vessel quivered and shook as though by the impact of a heavy body. There was a mighty convulsion, a heaving, and I was flung

half-way across the deck. I clung to the guard-rail and saved myself. Immediately my thoughts went to my Silver-Girl, and I looked, to find her lying face downward on the deck.

I ran to her side and bent over her. Then I heard the patter of feet behind me. Something hard struck me over the head. Dazed, I stumbled back, my hand upraised, and confronted Arif, who held a revolver pointed at my chest.

At the same moment oaths and curses came from below, and the rapid pop-pop, crack-crack, of rifles and revolvers. A shrill cry, the cry of one done to death, resounded above the tumult. My eyes saw shadowy forms creeping up the ladder from below.

Not caring for the consequences, I flung myself on Arif. Together we grappled for possession of the revolver. I had his hand held tightly, and we swayed to and fro, while I tried for a better grip with my other hand. Suddenly releasing my grasp on his body, I struck him heavily in the face, and stuck out my leg. He tripped and fell, with me on top of him, and I wrenched the revolver from his hand.

Almost immediately the slinking figures surrounded me out of the darkness. "Help," I yelled; and the revolver spoke out twice.

"Hold on a minute," shouted a sturdy American voice.

A rifle cracked, and one of my assailants jumped up, clawed air, and went over on his face. Four sailors rushed pell-mell through the crowd and ranged themselves at my side.

"Hold them while I take Miss Stuart," I cried; and I picked up my Silver-Girl tenderly and deposited her on the steamer-chair. There was a rush of our assailants, but they fell back before our weapons' quick reply.

The ship had stopped and was wobbling in the current. "Machinery blown out," answered one of my companions briefly, in answer to my question. "These devils grappled their junk alongside and boarded us. Knifed the men on watch mostly."

Our enemies had retreated to a safe

distance; and had ceased firing. They were planning some new deviltry, I knew, but what?

That question was soon answered. They fell back to the shelter of the boats, calling out shrilly in their native tongue. I heard them and realized the new horror.

"The stink-ball!" I cried in an agony of fear. I sheltered the Silver-Girl behind me, and fired deliberately at the men advancing.

It was too late. Three heavy projectiles were launched through the air. My breath came in gasps. My eyes watered. Slowly, it seemed, I was being asphyxiated. I tried to pull the trigger of my revolver, but my hand was palsied.

The balls had burst, and their foul, overwhelming odor was in my nostrils, my mouth, my eyes. I fought against my fate, rushing forward, stumbling like the halt and the blind.

Then something seemed to snap; and what happened for some time after I am not capable of telling, for I have no idea of what it was.

I went unconscious, overpowered by the deadly fumes.

CHAPTER XII.

THE WHEEL OF DESTINY.

When my mind began to approach consciousness again the past events slowly reviewed themselves. I saw the moonlight on the water and then on the face of the Silver-Girl. Her blue eyes were questioning me. Her answer was trembling on her lips. I was bending over, and then——

What had happened? Ghouls and phantoms rushed by me, flapping invisible wings. Huge vampirian monsters of the night showed white fangs dripping blood. A deadly something entered my nostrils. There were sounds of firing, of shrieks, the cries of men done to death.

My head was seemingly seared with a red-hot iron. Something—an iron band, maybe—held it together that it

might not burst. My hands, my arms, my legs, were numb.

Had they put lead on my eyes? No! I opened them and saw the dun-colored clouds above me. I was rocking. Still on-shipboard? I closed my eyes wearily, but perforce opened them once again.

No, I was being carried on a litter by two villainous-looking coolies. The one behind had noted my return to consciousness, and began to jabber to his companion.

"*Aeie!* he has awakened, the white devil. Shall we be his beasts of burden now, brother?"

The man before craned about his neck and glowered at me. "He shall walk, this foreign devil," said he.

I tried to speak, but it seemed that my tongue was locked also. "Where are you taking me?" I asked in their own tongue, but very weakly.

"*Aeie!* he can speak," they cried in unison. "Shall he not therefore walk?" They spoke the Chinese of the hill-country.

I had discovered by now that my hands and feet were tied together. My hands were blood-stained where the coarse rope had torn the flesh. My serge yachting-suit was in bits.

It was raining, steadily and persistently. The drops fell on my hot face, and cooled me gratefully. I opened my mouth, that the overwhelming thirst with me might be assuaged in some little wise. But the few drops of moisture only aggravated the red-hot furnace within me.

"Water," I gasped.

"He can ask for water," said the second coolie sullenly; "therefore he should walk, is it not so?"

"*Aeie!* let him walk. Devil! Who are we that we should carry the foreign dog?"

Ahead of me I saw other litters. Men marched with a semblance of regularity. The slush-slush of their feet in the mud had something of the march of soldiers. One man rode a pony, but I could not make out the form.

"Tell me where I am," I demanded. "And whose orders do you obey? For

your labor you shall be well paid—and more if you answer me truthfully."

"Money?" demanded the first coolie, craning his neck again, an avaricious look in his eye. "You have money, then, you of the white face?"

"Aye," I answered him. "What I shall give you will more than equal the weight of more copper cash than you may carry between you. Come now. Answer."

To speak was an agony. My tongue seemed as rough-edged as a file and as brittle. It irritated the sensitive membrane of the throat. I burst into violent coughing.

"Where is this money?" asked the second coolie.

"Unbind my hands and I will give it you," said I.

I knew that I had a sovereign-case with some ten gold pieces in it stowed away in a small inner pocket of my trousers. My money-belt, which I wore next the skin, held something like two hundred half-eagles, but I did not think it would be necessary to reveal its whereabouts.

The litter stopped for a moment, and the coolies regarded me. Then came a swift cry of admonition, and the man on the horse galloped back, and a lash fell across the shoulders of coolie number one. My bleared eyes took in the erect, well-molded form, attired in the vestments of a Chinese mandarin. There was no mistaking him—it was Arif.

Compressing his lips, and clenching his hands, the coolie quickened his pace. Arif rode back to the head of the column.

"Ah! the dog—a white dog such as thou——" and he cast a glance at me that was malevolent. "May his children be accursed a thousand times!"

"Unbind my hands," said I, "and I will give you that which will salve a thousand hurts. Come."

The coolie stole a glance at the figure on horseback riding ahead. "It is forbidden," he said sullenly. "It may not be."

"Tell me, then, what you know; and when we rest you shall take out the

treasure for yourself. Will you answer my questions?"

He said something in reply which I did not catch, for this Chinese of the Hillmen is dissimilar in many respects to the language which I knew. But I rightly took the mumbling to mean an affirmative.

My thoughts rambled. There were so many questions to ask. At the thought of my Silver-Girl my heart smote me, for I knew nothing of her whereabouts, nor what had happened to her since I was stricken down at her side. A wave of horror stole over me. Quickly I gasped:

"There is a lady—a very beautiful lady, who in her own country is queen. She, too, is white, and has hair like the moon. You have seen her?"

The second coolie broke in in rapid singsong. "*Aeie!—aeie!* We have seen her. She is white and has hair like the moon—we have seen her."

"Tell me," I demanded, upraising my head in my agony of doubt. "Where?"

"She is carried ahead by two men from Mehung. There are four others who travel beside her to lift her litter when stony places come. *Aeie!* She is a queen, for it is thus that queens travel—"

"She is ahead—near?" I cried.

"Near, indeed. But a few paces before, as you may see. It is the litter where there are many men—that is the litter of the beautiful Moon-Queen."

I sank back. My first sensation was one of relief. At least she was not harmed; and I had feared the worst. She was not conveyed as I, but in state and with ceremony. But—here I shook as though with the ague—she was in Arif's hands, and that meant—I hid my face in the straw that made up the bed of my litter.

Presently I grew calm again. It was best to know just what had happened and how.

"It is the word of a mandarin," said I. "Look you, coolies, you have called me white devil. True that is, but am I also a mandarin of your empire." And I spoke some words of the mandarin's

code. "Thus my honor, by the hands of your emperor. You believe?"

Their demeanor suffered a sudden change. This was, indeed, different. A ruler of their own people was a ruler, no matter what his skin color—white, yellow, or brown.

"Excellency!" said the coolie ahead. "Ten thousand pardons we crave from your Illustrious Presence, we the humble ones, the worms, the insects of the highway——"

"Peace! It is enough," I said. "This word have I passed to fitly reward you. Now I would know all! When I last saw earth, I was on board a ship. There was an attack. A stink-ball was thrown, then another. I awake. I am here! How comes it all?"

"Excellency!" again broke in the second coolie, in his monotonous singsong. "We are poor men, we are worms, we are insects. How may we know what the excellency knows——"

"Let your companion answer," I said.

The other coolie spoke. "We are but hired by the great white excellency, who is also the Master of the Sun, Moon, and Stars. We are poor men and honest. Litter-bearers of Wan. Believe that we intentioned no harm to his excellency, who is the Brother of the Stars——"

"What you know?" I demanded. The pain in which I found myself was intense, and this dilatory telling set every nerve on edge.

"We know but little. Days ago, came there to Wan an excellency of rank. He bade us, litter-bearers, be ready that eve for a journey of many miles toward the Forever-Sacred Mountains. We made ready, and that eve were joined on the outskirts of the city by this excellency and many men in the garb of an excellency's soldiers. Also other litter-bearers of the service of Mehung. We were put aboard a junk, and bade be still. We slept. Awakened then when came there much noise and fighting. But we were kept below. Then came the junk away, and sailed for a day and a night. The next morning

came we ashore with our litters, and were bade take up your excellency. We have thus borne him for three days——"

"Three days—I have slept——"

"The Great One had given sleeping potions," said the second coolie.

The other continued:

"So have we traveled, taking but little rest. And the excellency is a weight. We are poor men and weary. Nor have we eaten a sufficiency. That is all we know."

"You spoke of the White Moon-Queen. There is another white lady of great rank with her?"

"No, excellency," replied the man. "None are they save your excellency and her."

No one but my Silver-Girl and myself! The grouping of our names thus might have been sweet did I not realize her peril. When I thought of her agony of mind in these past days my heart stood still! Would she survive this, this frail, beautiful sylph?"

The coolies knew very little. They could only tell me that the White Moon-Queen was angry, and that she had not wished to come; but that she had been forced to do so. They were traveling by unfrequented roads toward the Giami-Tchu Mountains—that mighty range that separates China from the Roof of the World; and which is known as the Sacred Mountains. They could tell me no more, for they knew no more.

Twilight had come and passed since the coolies began to tell me the tale; and now night was upon us once more. The darkness about me was Stygian, and I wondered that the coolies were able to walk so sure-footedly without lights to guide them. As if in accordance with my thoughts, torches began to flare up from ahead, casting a red, guttering light over the marching horde. I counted something like fifty men in the caravan, including litter-bearers.

The rain still continued to pour down remorselessly, and I was by now soaked through and through. But in spite of my wetness, or maybe because

of it, there was a hotness to my body far from pleasant. My head rang as though there were drums beaten within. My whole body ached.

I endeavored to get my thoughts into some similitude of orderliness; but persistently they wandered away to thoughts of the grotesque and horrible. Queer phantoms seemed to brush by me. One moment I was back in Del Monte, and the light of the candles fell on the rare beauty of the Silver-Girl; another time I was in the Paris Salon, gazing at her picture. With seeming irrelevance, I was a boy playing highway robber—I distinctly remember that I was Jack Sheppard—and then—back to this.

So neither Liang-Hiao nor Daisy La Salle had been judged as worth while. I, alone, was to share the fate of my beautiful Silver-Girl, whatever that fate was to be. I clenched my teeth in my fearful pain—to be racked in mind and in body at the same time was an ordeal that I pray many may not have to pass through.

When the litter-bearers had told me what they knew, I relapsed into that frame of mind, half-delirious, in which these thoughts of the present and reminiscences of the past came. My thoughts were broken in upon occasionally by the shrill cries of the soldiers—a guttural chant, perhaps; a jest, a laugh. Sometimes the lights flared up; and sometimes everything seemed in total darkness. How long all this continued I do not know. If it may be counted by mental and bodily anguish, I suffered years of pain.

But a halt was called now. We had ascended a hill, and were resting near its crest. Orders were given to halt for the night. I was left on the ground. Presently my coolies came back.

"The money, excellency," they said.

I told them of the sovereign-case, and bade them take it.

"Excellency will have no need for money. Excellency is to join his illustrious fathers!" said coolie number one.

To die! Then it was to come soon. Perhaps I welcomed it. My pain would cease, at all events.

"It has been spoken," said the second coolie; and he stowed away the sovereign-case in his capacious gown. "We have come to one of the abodes of the Dwellers-in-Caves. Years ago, they were put to the sword, and none here inhabit. Within this cave we rest for the night——"

They picked up the litter again.

"And excellency will be judged here," added the first coolie.

They carried me within; and I guessed from their exclamations that the roof of the passage was low, for they several times had it come in contact with their heads. A damp, earthy smell was in my nostrils—the smell of the grave. The smell and the fact that I was to die here fitted in altogether too well. I was smitten with a sickly feeling at the stomach.

And my Silver-Girl! What of her?

The light of the link ahead showed the way to the coolies, and after wandering about for some minutes in the narrow passages, we finally came into a series of caves, not burrowed by men, but the work of nature. Great stalactites hung from overhead, and arches showed further recesses.

A fire had been started, and it blazed away, lighting up the dark corners and throwing weird, fantastic shadows in the far recesses. A bat and its mate whirled by. Some swallows chirped. With a snarl, a hyena fled into the darkness, and a jackal yelped.

The torches had been thrust into the ground at intervals. The palanquin was placed near the fire. Presently the slide was pulled back; and, in the light of the torches, I saw my Silver-Girl.

At the same moment Arif emerged from somewhere, and gave orders that I be carried near to the fire. I was lifted up and deposited at the feet of the lady of the Silver Clouds.

Her face was strained, terrified; but proud withal—the look of one who suffers without complaint. Her eyes wandered to me; then with a great cry she flung herself by my side; but before she might touch me, Arif stepped between us.

"This must not be," he said.

"Stanford," she wailed.

Arif turned squarely upon her, and lifted her into the palanquin. "You cannot help him by these manifestations," he said. "And you are powerless to resist. Why seek to do so, and force me to the things I do not wish?"

She remained silent, her little white teeth closing over her lips. Her eyes looked into mine, and told me what I had wished to know. She loved me, this Silver-Girl of mine. Even in my sore distress, this was like the singing of the birds of spring. So unconscious was I of all else that I caught myself humming a little lilt from "Erminie":

When love is young, all the world seems
gay,
Tra, la, la, la, la, la.

It was over in a moment—a brief, ecstatic moment, for Arif had fixed his eyes on me.

"Captain Sansome," he said, "it is unwise to trust a person because of belief in one's own superiority of defense, is it not?"

I did not answer. Another man in mandarin robes came out of the shadows and stood by Arif's side. "You, perhaps, have seen the mandarin before?" asked Arif.

It was that accursed John Moon again. He smiled blandly. "I remember the gentleman quite well," said John Moon, his voice soft as a cat's purr.

"We are hungry. We are tired. We wish to sleep. But first, my friend, we must get rid of you." Arif was speaking to me. "You wonder why I have brought you so many hundred miles simply to get rid of you. It was a petty reason, but you shall know it. I wished you to go into the other world with a full recognizance of all that had happened to you in this. Then, too, I wished Miss Stuart to understand that you were gone beyond all hopes. You thought, perhaps, I did not see your pretty little romance. You were mistaken. Miss Stuart is destined for nobler things. She is a woman with a destiny—for shall she not bring forth Him who will rule the world?"

Out of his eyes gleamed a something I had seen somewhere before. Vaguely I endeavored to remember. It had no connection with him.

"The mother of the Ruler of the world. The wife of Buddha the Ever-Blessed——"

Now I remembered where I had seen that demoniac gleam. It was in the face of a madman—a madman who had escaped from the place in which he was confined, and who had attacked me on the road. I recalled the vicinity perfectly. It was the road near Napa, California. He had sprung on me from the bushes and——

But enough of that! I began to understand better, to believe now how these things had come to be. Arif was a fanatic, a madman. He had carried out these plans because he believed—believed!

"You have very little longer to live. Miss Stuart shall see you die. She may then banish from her mind all thoughts of you, and set them on the higher things of life—the great destiny which awaits her. When we have eaten and rested, we shall take up our journey to the Sacred Mountains, and then to the City of Buddha—Lhasa, where great rejoicing shall reign when Dalai Lama is united to his queen, his goddess, Ashtar, the Silver-One."

Evidently at a sign from him, his soldiers had arranged themselves in position on either side of him. They clasped their guns in both hands, the butts resting on the ground. Their eyes were upon him as he stood there. Out of the shadows came the occasional flurry of bat wings, the piping of the swallows; sometimes the mournful hoot of an owl. So still was everything when Arif rested in his speech that I thought I could hear the rushing of a subterranean stream very near to me.

"You shall know all that has been done to find you, Ashtar the Queen, who, from this night, shall be Miss Stuart no longer." He was still speaking in English, but his voice had taken on the sonorous roll of the Oriental, evidently in accordance with the trend of his thoughts.

"Some five years ago an explorer was found in the Holy City, and slain by order of the lamas. As Miss Stuart has already been told, this man was her father. On his person was found a painted miniature—your picture, Ashtar——"

The owl hooted again.

"And when this picture was seen, it was known that the Silver-Goddess had been created in human form; and that Ashtar would wed Buddha. So a search was made, and the Abbot Mhong"—he inclined his head toward John Moon—"was he who made the search. He reported that the queen was as yet a child, and so it was decided by the Council of Holies that she should not come until she was a woman grown. When the time was at hand, letters found upon her father were imitated by those skilful with the pen; and I went forth armed with the letter and the story of her father, who was waiting for her. All would have been well, had not you and that exiled mandarin, Liang-Hiao, sought to pit your wits against those of the Council—against the order of Destiny? And this is the end of it all, for he is dead, drowned in the river, while you shall this night die in the same fashion——"

He ceased, for there had come from my Silver-Girl a cry of horror and fear; one long shriek that culminated in a sob and a gasp. She fell from the palanquin. Arif crossed and lifted her back again, then turned to Mhong—the erstwhile John Moon—who set about reviving her.

I had gone too far into agonies of mind to be made further miserable by this tale of diabolic cleverness. I had played the game and lost. There was nothing left to do except to face the end of it all without fear. And had it not been for her whom I loved, I could have done this quite well; for I was in too much misery to care very much for life.

He continued to talk; to tell how he had arranged that the machinery of the yacht should be crippled, in order that John Moon might have enough time to proceed up-river in our lead

and arrange the attacking party. They had taken the junk and grappled with the yacht. The stink-balls had overpowered the defenders. Liang-Hiao had been killed and my Silver-Girl and myself taken prisoners. The machinery of the yacht had again been disabled, and she had been left to the mercy of the tide. Some sailors were injured, some killed; but otherwise the yacht people were unharmed.

All this came to me dully. Arif told it in an entirely impersonal way, as though he had had no participation in it.

"Come—have it over," I said wearily. "I'm tired. What do you intend to do?"

"You have spoken it. We will indeed make an end. I send you into the next world because you know too much. It is not safe that you should live, for should you escape and carry this tale to your countrymen, or to the English, they would pour their soldiers into the Sacred Land. You have fallen afoul of the Wheel of Destiny—and there is no more to be said."

"Well?" I demanded sullenly.

"A river flows through these caverns. You shall be given to the river, bound as you are. Could death be surer? To die by natural forces—that is the work of no man. You are ready, or would you pray to your God and your saints?"

There was a pause. It was indeed bitter to ask a favor of him, but I could not go without a look at my Silver-Girl.

"Miss Stuart?" I said. "Might I look at her?"

He frowned. "She is past you—she cannot retrograde. No!"

"Ah! yes, yes." Her voice again, feeble but strengthened with the fierceness of love and pity. "Ah! yes, yes." She had torn herself from John Moon and flung herself down by my side.

"Sweetheart," I breathed.

"Yes, yes." Her hands caressed my face. "Yours, yours, no matter what they say. Your always, Stanford. Believe me. I was not sure before they took me away—but in the last horrible days I knew——"

I was overpowered with the things I had to say. So many of them, and so little time. Arif had moved forward to force her away, but John Moon had him by the sleeve. "It is the end," he said. "What matters it?"

The fragrance of her was in my nostrils. I was being wafted away to Arcadia and the apple-blossoms and chestnut-buds of spring. Somewhere the sun was shining; and we were there together. The roses grew up in our path. All was fair, and she was with me.

When love is young, all the world seems
gay,
Tra, la, la, la, la, la.

The lilt from "Erminie" again. Surely this seems out of place. For I was to die: these were my last minutes on earth. Therefore should my mind be full of solemn things. But the lilt was in my brain, and the world was in spring-time.

"I love you," I choked out. "I love you. Joy, my Silver-Girl—mine——"

"Yours, yours," she wept. "Yours for——"

After all, was it spring-time? She was weeping—but sometimes people wept for joy. Then I remembered—I was to die. It was not quite comprehensible. One did not die when such happiness was his own. "Death"—a chimera, a phantasm: one lived when such love was granted to him.

"And no matter what happens—Stanford, I love you. I shall never love any one but you. You will always be in my heart, dearest, dearest one. Always in my heart."

After all—the lilt! Love!

"It is for me, Stanford, for me—you are dying for me. I cannot, I won't—give you up. I love you, I can't live without you—you must not die, you shall not die." She was sobbing hysterically, as she knelt there by me; and I could feel the throbbing of her breast against mine. Tears—her tears—fell on my face.

"But you love me—and I—love you, Joy. My Silver-Girl, my Silver-Girl.

Death can't change that. Maybe somewhere there's another world."

She clung to me.

"Come." It was Arif's voice. "The time has come." He placed his hand on her shoulder. She sprang to her feet.

"No, no! I hate you—you toad, I hate you. You shall not take him from me. You shall not. I love him, I love him; you shall not take him."

He grasped either shoulder and pushed her behind him. Two soldiers lifted me up. I could see that she was rushing back, her pretty hands before her, her beautiful hair hanging over her face. He repulsed her when she would have rushed to my side.

"Where are you taking him? Take me, too. Where are you taking him?"

"He is going to the river and to the peaceful, painless death that awaits him there."

"No, no," and again she would have joined me; but two soldiers crossed their rifles before her. Then she froze into marble, seemingly, the cold rage of a queen. One finger was pointed at Arif.

"May God curse you, you devil!" she cried.

The men carried me away. I could see her no longer; but I heard her wail reecho in the farthest recesses of the caverns:

"Stanford, Stanford, I love you."

TO BE CONTINUED.



A STORY OF SIR HENRY IRVING

DURING a rehearsal of "The Corsican Brothers" at Irving's Lyceum Theater, in London, the proceedings were delayed somewhat by the non-arrival of the star.

Suddenly, in response to the unanswered cue, one of the company, a promising young actor, took it up, and went through the whole scene, imitating to the life the peculiar voice, the strut, the gestures, and the mannerisms of Irving which were so familiar.

Now, as it so happened, the "ruling power" had sauntered into the theater through the public entrance, and was quietly watching and calmly digesting the situation unobserved, as, of course, there were no lights in the front to "discover" the presence of any human being.

Wending his way through the house to the back of the stage, Irving bided his time, and when the mimic had terminated his speech the "master" went up to him, and, putting his hand on the other man's shoulder, he said, apparently quite seriously and earnestly:

"Very good, my boy; very good, indeed! The best piece of acting I have seen for years—excellent—quite excellent!"

The terrified young fellow, taken off his guard, blurted out:

"Thank you, Mr. (he was plain Mr. in those days) Irving. I am flattered, believe me. Why, I thought perhaps you——"

"Yes, it was good, deuced good; too good, in fact; much too good, for you see, my boy, this is the Lyceum Theater, and in it there is only room for one Irving; so you see, my dear boy, either you or I will have to—er—er—er—you see the position, don't you, my boy, eh? Ah, yes, I thought you'd understand. Good morning!"

And the youth had his face turned gently but firmly toward the stage-door, through which he passed, never to return again.

The Trials of Commander McTurk

By Cutcliffe Hyne

Author of "Captain Kettle, K. C. B.," "McTodd," Etc.

VIII.—TAKING WATER

(A Complete Story)



HERE is not the least doubt that the German Water-works Company, in Santa Barbara, had been very badly treated. In effect the Venezuelan Government had said: "We covet your goods, and will proceed to take them. Clear out!" And in reply Berlin had threatened, the emperor had made a patriotic speech at a swearing in of recruits, and a German second-class cruiser had demonstrated along the Venezuelan seaboard. The Big Power at Washington had likewise taken off its coat so as to have free action in case it was necessary to step in and umpire.

Santa Barbara is a city of much domestic history. In early days it was one of the first European settlements on the Spanish Main; it built a great cathedral in amber-colored stone, and set up a branch office of the Holy Inquisition; and it enjoyed the distinction of being twice harried by Sir Francis Drake. In more modern times, under the Venezuelan régime, by the help of revolution, earthquakes, and political intrigue generally, it has contrived to bring local life and property to a pitch of insecurity greater than can be found anywhere else in all South America.

The Santa Barbara River—which is just a mountain stream—runs through the city from south to north, and until

five years ago the citizens used this stream with a fine impartiality to wash in, to drink from, and to carry away their refuse. When an intelligent German, who had nearly died of Santa Barbara typhoid, thought out a water scheme, they listened to him with respect and interest; and when, later, he arrived with large German capitalists in his train, the city fathers extracted all they could get in the way of bribes, and permitted the water works to be constructed without further interference.

It never occurred to the citizens of Santa Barbara that their new water supply was a luxury, far less a necessity, and when subsequently the question of paying a water-rate arose, they merely waved a certain number of yellow, cigarette-stained fingers, and laughed. The idea of paying any one—especially Germans—for water was too comic.

Now, a good deal has been written about the sanity of people who lend out their money in South America with any idea of seeing a regular and decent return therefrom, but Herr Gustav von Ralle, who was the founder of, and had made himself chief stockholder in, this Santa Barbara water-works scheme, was a man with strong instincts of self-preservation. He had been born and reared in Berlin; he had spent the years between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine in Chicago; and he was well in touch with those larger financial con-

cerns which can pull the leading-reins of governments all the civilized world over.

When the city of Santa Barbara refused to pay its water-rates, the stock of the water company drooped on the Stock Exchange, and drooped, and drooped, till at length it landed in the gutter with those bankrupt concerns whose shares are used only as gambling counters.

At this price Von Ralle steadily bought. And it was not until he had collected fifty-five per cent. of the whole of the scrip into his own safe that he pulled those political strings which sent the German second-class cruiser *Fürst Eitel* to demonstrate against the coast towns of Venezuela.

The Venezuelan Navy was at the moment a neglectable quantity, but high hopes were placed on an up-to-date torpedo-boat destroyer purchased from the McMechie Shipbuilding Company, in the United States, and now on its way out to La Guayra under the charge of one J. K. McTurk, Commander U. S. N. (retired).

The Venezuelan Government had christened the destroyer *Bolivar* in advance of her arrival, and were a good deal perturbed at hearing—via New York, Paris, and London—that this enterprising vessel already had created a "strained relationship" with Germany.

What made the matter all the more annoying was a knowledge that the *Bolivar* had set off with only a shipyard crew; that she had no ammunition on board, and even lacked warheads to her torpedoes.

Yet of certain facts reported about her there was not an atom of doubt: she steamed into the roadstead of Santa Barbara, and found there the *Fürst Eitel* shaking a mailed fist. She had held intercourse with this vessel at first in the way of civility; had come to anchor within a cable's length of her; and then of a sudden had trained torpedo-tubes on her beam, and bidden her steam out to sea or be blown up.

The *Fürst Eitel* had gone her way, snarling threats, and the *Bolivar* had coaled up from a hulk, and steamed off

to an unknown destination. And here came in the astonishing part of the whole performance: the destroyer had not yet been transferred to the Venezuelan flag, and in point of fact had not even been paid for. She was technically a merchant vessel on the United States register.

Now, tidings of what had been going on had oozed over to New York, and a certain Semitic gentleman, who carried the very Scottish name of McMechie, was kept thereby waving the palms of dismay. To every cable station on the shores of the Caribbean Sea he sent urgent messages, entreating and imploring Commander John Kelly McTurk to:

Deliver vessel at destination without further delay, and collect price as per arrangement.

And sometimes he so far forgot himself as to add threats. But Commander McTurk guessed that such messages would be chasing him, and avoided all spots where submarine cables landed as though they had been centers of bubonic plague.

It remained for one of the yellow newspapers to start a half-laughing sensation with the title:

Is the gallant commander trying to be a pirate? Or is he merely eloping with Mrs. Codrington?

A copy of this print, mailed by Miss Bridget McTurk, reached the *Bolivar* by devious ways, and J. K. McTurk ripped it open, read it with a purpling cheek, and thrust it, with furious gesture, before a lady who sat at the other side of the narrow cabin table.

"There!" he said. "Just read it for yourself, Lucy. This must be stopped at once. I shall send ashore to bring off a padre."

"I would, of course, if I were you, if you think it will cool you. But what exactly for? To confess to?"

"No; to marry me to Lucy Codrington, widow."

"Ah, but there you are going ahead too fast. It takes two to agree to a contract of that kind, and I'm not one of them. I'm very fond of you, J. K.;

we're quite agreed upon that point; but I'm not going to marry you. At least, not yet."

"But think where you are!"

"Once aboard the lugger, and the girl is mine," quoted Mrs. Codrington in tuneful recitative. "No, no. That classical incident occurred long, long ago, and history does not always repeat itself accurately. Besides, a torpedo-boat destroyer isn't a lugger, anyway; and, moreover, your chief engineer, Mr. McTodd, is a most efficient chaperon. You'll have noticed how he breaks in upon our tête-à-tête on every possible and impossible opportunity."

Commander McTurk laughed in spite of his annoyance. "It's been pretty obvious, confound his impudence!"

"Then," said Mrs. Codrington in airy conclusion, "don't you worry about me, J. K."

"But I do worry. We've brought off a gorgeous bluff against the *Fürst Eitel* once, but we can't do that a second time. They'll know who we are by this, and how harmless we are, and how the whole world is laughing at them for their climb down. If they could catch us now we should be in for something pretty degrading; and, by Glory, I'm not going to risk taking sauce from those starched, stuck-up Dutchmen for anything you could name!"

Mrs. Codrington looked up and addressed the skylight. "And not five minutes ago this great, tall man was vowing me eternal service."

"Besides," Commander McTurk added vexedly, "what you want is ridiculous. This Von Ralle fellow has gotten control of the Santa Barbara water-works, and you'll never make him let go as long as the world stands. It's no use crying for the moon, Lucy."

Mrs. Codrington lowered her gaze and looked at him steadily, and till then McTurk had never fully realized how much strength and determination could, upon occasion, peep out from the lady's very pretty face. She said nothing, but he looked her over, and read her reply plainly enough. He threw up his hand with a rather harassed laugh. "Well, anyway, of course, I'll do my

best to help, but I bet you two dollars and a half you don't get it."

"Get which? The moon or the water-works?"

"Either or both."

"Done with you, J. K.," said she, and there McTodd interrupted them.

"I thought I'd just tell ye, captain, there's the Dutchman coming in from the east'ard; and from the sinful way he's burning best Welsh, he seems in a hurry."

"Then we must get away from here at once. You have steam up?"

"Aye, I've steam. Man, I carried oot your orders there to the foot of the letter, as we say in France. But the humorous thing is that for the moment we canna use it. That busy-minded son-of-a-whisker, my second, has amused himself during my watch below with getting the low-press cylinder-heid off from the starboard engine, and it's a four hours' job to repack and refit it at the very least. Ye see, there was a blowing joint——"

But Commander McTurk waited for no more. He darted up through the companion and got on deck. The sun glared down upon the anchorage with breathless heat; the shore behind rose up in a steep wall of unbroken greenery; and over the dark-blue saucer-edge of the horizon the *Fürst Eitel* had already lifted her round military-tops.

On the destroyer smoke trickled vertically skyward from two of her stacks, and collected into a hazy cauliflower overhead; and from her poop-staff the Stars and Stripes hung in limp, moveless folds.

Commander McTurk let his eyes rest on his country's flag, and had it in him to have groaned aloud. He knew the temper of the officers on the German cruiser. He had heartily disliked their stiff, unbending attitude, even when they had met him first of all on the plane of civility; and now, after the quarrel in which he had bluffed them, and so held them up to ridicule, he was sure they would be coldly merciless in any indignities they could see their way to putting either on him or his flag.

But Commander John Kelly McTurk

was one of those fortunate men whose resourcefulness is never so great as in moments of violent stress. He looked at the oncoming cruiser, and he looked at the desolate sea, and within sixteen seconds he had formed his plan and was busily carrying it out in detail.

The second-class cruiser *Fürst Eitel* bustled up to within two hundred yards of the *Bolivar*, looking extremely German and extremely aggressive. She had been badly bluffed by Commander McTurk once, and did not propose to repeat the experience. She had been held up to the delighted ridicule of the civilized world, and she had caused a Very Great Personage in Berlin to dance with impotent rage.

The Great Personage had sent her captain a telegram to express his views, and they were lurid views. He was a Personage much addicted to views and telegrams. And Captain Schunk—as Commander McTurk was not available—had vented the first ooings of his spleen on a certain Herr Gustav von Ralle, who happened to be on the *Fürst Eitel* as a passenger.

Captain Schunk, as became his service, had the most profound contempt for civilians, and maybe he had been a trifle misled by the pacific attitude which Von Ralle had shown heretofore. The cruiser's officers, as became their service, had endured him among them, but let him understand he was a pariah; and Von Ralle, with the utmost placidity, had put up with what treatment he received, but saw to it that the cruiser fulfilled her mission of harassing Venezuela.

But when suddenly, in response to a peremptory summons, he was dragged before a furious captain, who exploded insults and brandished a telegram, why, then, the meekness of Herr von Ralle dropped away from him. He waited till the frantic officer paused for want of breath, and then he also produced a telegram.

The portly Schunk read it with white fury:

HERR VON RALLE. ON BOARD "FÜRST EITEL": Take no notice. Cable will arrive

from our advertising agent. Continue water-works policy agreed upon. Cable us immediately if *Fürst Eitel* captain intractable and we will have him replaced.

And then there followed a name, not of a trading company or of a financial firm, but of a man in the inner councils of the German Government.

"Now," said Von Ralle, "the German Navy, from my point of view, exists not for the benefit of its officers, but for the benefit of German commerce. You may continue to be rude to me if it amuses you. I really don't care about that one way or the other; but when you intend to neglect the work for which you were sent out here, I wish you would give me warning so that I may make my arrangements. As I have had the honor to inform you, it is practically Mrs. Codrington who is setting the German control of the Santa Barbara water-works at defiance. I gave you notice that Mrs. Codrington was on the *Bolivar*, and you tried to arrest her, and—er—failed. I now give you further notice that she is still on the *Bolivar*, and there is a charge against her of conspiracy, and the Venezuelan Government has promised to give her up. If we can get Mrs. Codrington off the spot for six months while she stands her trial in Berlin, the water-works matter will be concluded here, however the law sees fit to deal with Mrs. Codrington."

"But," objected Captain Schunk, "if the *Bolivar* should fly the American flag, and she refuses to give Mrs. Codrington up—which is likely—I cannot search her by force. That would mean war with the United States, and though our navy would be only too pleased to give the Yankees a drubbing, I have specific orders from Berlin not to provoke trouble."

"The *Bolivar*," Von Ralle assured him, "is Venezuelan. Built she was in America, I grant you, by that scoundrel McMechie, but bought she has been by these Venezuelans; and if she still flies the Stars and Stripes it is merely a matter of strategy."

With this understanding, then, firmly fixed in his mind, Captain Schunk

spread no superfluous civility over his demand for the surrender of Mrs. Codrington, when, for the second time, he came within touch of the *Bolivar*; and in his turn Commander McTurk rasped back a refusal which made the gun captains' hands on the *Fürst Eitel* hover over their firing-keys.

"I give you fair warning," said the German, "that if the lady is not surrendered within the next ten minutes, I shall fire into you."

"You can fire," retorted McTurk truculently, "till you're black in the face, and I give you my personal guarantee that your first shot will set light to a blazing war between Germany and the United States."

"And that'll mean a slump in sausages!" sang out the no-nation Lieutenant Stubbs from behind a ventilator, where his superior officer could not see him.

"That tale does not impose upon me," Captain Schunk went on. "I know quite well, by the dates that have been given me, that your ship now belongs to Venezuela."

"Dates are deceptive things," suggested McTurk. "I used frequently to go wrong on them myself when I was at school. I don't much know what the officers of the German Navy are, but in the United States Service they are gentlemen, and I give you my personal guarantee, as an officer in the United States Navy, that this packet I'm standing on belongs no more to Venezuela than she does to Chile."

The German was evidently struck by the tall sailor's tone. "But I know for a fact she was destined for Venezuela."

"I don't dispute it for a moment. But she was not delivered. If you want to go into commercial details, she was brought to the port of delivery, according to our contract; but the dollars were not forthcoming, and so we steamed off here till they had been collected, and how you got told of our whereabouts I don't know."

But at that point Captain Schunk's parleying was broken off suddenly. His eye fell on a thin, gray, sparlike something in the water. It was making a

leisurely way toward his ship, and three-score of other eyes saw it at the same time, and forty voices cackled a Teutonic warning. It looked like an iron fall-pipe, such as one sees under rain-water spouts on the sides of houses ashore, with something that glistened at the top.

It bobbed up and down in the twinkling blue sea, sometimes showing as much as three feet above the surface and sometimes being submerged, and it advanced steadily toward the cruiser. It was followed by a green discoloration of the water, which gave up a froth of air-bubbles, and these advanced at an equal rate.

It is the pride of the German Navy that all their sailors are well-educated, and on the *Fürst Eitel* there was not a man, even from the lower deck, who did not immediately recognize the thing as the periscope of a submarine.

Machine-guns and quick-firers swung away from the *Bolivar* and trained on it with instant consent. A hundred rifle-muzzles quavered at it, and a hundred fingers pressed the triggers within a trace of the firing-pull. It speaks well for that crew that they showed no open panic. The newest horror of naval warfare is a thing that might well have daunted Nelson. Herr von Ralle, the only man on board without a duty station, ran to the opposite rail, and stood there perched ready for a dive.

But Captain Schunk held his nerve. "What in *Himmel* is this thing?" he shouted. "Do you call this Yankee, too, or is it Venezuelan?"

"I am not an inquiry agency," retorted Commander McTurk. "You are a seaman, I suppose, and should be able to read the chap's colors as well as I can; no better, no worse."

Schunk snapped an order, and the telegraph on his bridge jangled viciously. The cruiser's propellers flapped off instant life, and she circled and gathered way. The periscope followed slowly after her, and her gun-muzzles glared blackly at the iron mast and its green escort of bubbles.

The slowness of the periscope's movements, perhaps, tempted her; for once,

when she had drawn away to a mile distant, the cruiser slowed down. But thereupon the periscope disappeared, and the hint was sufficient.

Captain Schunk knew too much to risk his ship against the torpedoes of a submarine that he could not see. So he rang once more for full steam, and moved at the full of his speed away from so risky a neighborhood.

On the *Bolivar* a delighted crew welcomed their chief engineer as he came in over the side after an excursion along the sea floor in the destroyer's one and only diving-suit, and they unrove his air-tube from the port on the landward side through which it had been passed.

"I spoiled Lootenant Stubbs' shaving mirror to make the heid of yon periscope," said Mr. McTodd when his helmet had been taken off, "but it's sairved its purpose, and you may chuck the bits back into the ditch. But I'll ask ye to pull these boiler-tubes on board and uncouple them with care. The Jew firm that built this packet sent her to sea unco' short of boiler-tubes and most other spares. Hech! and here's Mrs. Codrington coming to photograph me and these 'gadgets' as the latest thing in optical delusions. Weel, ma'am, I take it you'll no' sell the pictures at a profit to the German papers. You'll find a far more lively market for them in London."

"Not to mention Paris and New York," laughed Commander McTurk. He rubbed his hands. "They've refitted that cylinder-head, Mr. McTodd, while you've been out for your walk; and when you have passed it we will get under way, and try again to get the Venezuelan Government to settle our little bill. I don't think they'll try to pinch the boat without payment a second time."

The men around him grinned, and Stubbs voiced the general sentiment by saying he hoped the Venezuelans would not disappoint them by turning honest.

"Funny thing is," said Stubbs, "that the crowd of us here signed on for what we thought would be as dull a

trip as could be thought of, and, thanks to you and Mrs. Codrington, it's been turned into the very fanciest kind of picnic."

By previous arrangement the destroyer avoided La Guayra this time, and brought up in the Santa Barbara roadstead. Her arrival was evidently anticipated and prepared for, for almost before she had shackled her cable end to somebody else's mooring-buoy, a strongly manned rowboat put off from the beach, carrying an official who was openly anxious to smooth matters over. His card stated that he was Don Jaime Serro.

"I think," he said, "that these will prove my strongest credentials, Captain McTurk," and he pulled out a thick sheaf of United States thousand-dollar bills. "For the rest, these papers will show you that I act for my government."

"Then probably you want to apologize," said McTurk stiffly, "for the piratical attempt your government made on this vessel in La Guayra Roads a week ago."

Don Jaime shrugged. "If you wish it, of course, captain. But it hardly comes within my province. My government only came into being yesterday. It is to the late government you should apply for your apology, and I am afraid you will find them hard to get hold of."

"Been having your usual weekly revolution since I have been away?"

"My country has been undergoing a revolution," said Don Jaime coldly, "but is now, I trust, at rest for evermore."

Commander McTurk took up the sheaf of bills, and, wetting his finger, counted them. The thousand tiny wrinkles in his red face deepened with perplexity, "The sum's all right," he said; "but the question is, am I to accept it?"

"I do not see that as a commercial man you can have any hesitation."

"You can take it from me," rasped Commander McTurk, "that I am not a commercial man. I intend to do

what's right, and I don't care two straws about the feelings of Venezuela or even the McMechie Shipbuilding Company on the matter. This vessel was built to the order of a government which, by your own showing, did not recognize Señor Don Jaime Serro. So I'm going to satisfy myself that Señor Serro's government is the legitimate successor to that other government before I hand the *Bolívar* over."

Don Jaime shrugged and pointed to the sheaf of money. "I should have thought, captain, that those would have proved my bona fides. But I believe I can still convince you." He fumbled in his pocket and brought out fifteen thousand dollars more, and offered them, with a bow. "I think, captain, that this argument will sweep away the rest of your objections."

"If you don't take yourself and your bribe over the side," McTurk snapped, "I'll throw you and it into the water. Quick! don't answer me. Go, you scum!"

The man would have hesitated, but McTurk, with furious gesture, drove him out on deck and had a foot ready to lift him over to his boat. Don Jaime avoided this, leaped, skidded on a thwart, sprawled among his oarsmen, and picked himself up looking a million maledictions. But even then his diplomacy did not desert him.

"As you wish for further conviction in the matter of my government's bona fides, may I ask you to visit the general commanding ashore?"

"He may call on me here."

"Oh, of course, if you are afraid of any little disturbance which may occur——"

"I am the least nervous of men, Señor Serro. Show me a reason why your general cannot come out here, and I'll call on him."

Serro's shoulders shrugged. "The thing is simple. War may break out between Venezuela and Germany any moment—has broken out already, for anything I can say—and with the *Fürst Eitel* prowling about our coasts, naturally all our military men are hard at work putting the finishing touches to

our defenses. That, also, is the reason for our wish to take over the *Bolívar* so quickly, and that is why I offered the small additional inducement in the hopes it might expedite matters. You take me?"

Commander McTurk scratched his long nose with a doubtful forefinger. "I don't know that I do. But I'll come ashore." And he turned to Lieutenant Stubbs and asked him to call away a boat.

Night fell with tropical suddenness as they gained the beach, but raw arc lamps promptly sizzled out by the side of the streets, and lit the place like day. It is not healthy in a Venezuelan city to leave any dark corners when revolution is in the air.

In the far distance there hung a mutter of sound that might have been thunder and might have been firing. But Commander McTurk troubled his head little about that, and set off at a brisk walk for the municipal building.

There was a buzz about the city that told that the population was awake, but few people met the eye. Here and there he came across a squad of men in ragged uniform, with rifles at the ready, patrolling the streets; and now and then civilians passed him, for the most part at the run, and clutching weapons beneath their cloaks.

It was one of these wayfarers who saw an acquaintance at a window, bawled forth a remark to him, and whipped out a revolver. The acquaintance did the same, and they fired six shots apiece, and scored twelve misses. After which they bowed ceremoniously, and the wayfarer continued his journey, reloading his revolver as he ran.

"By Glory!" chuckled Commander McTurk, "I used to think I was about the worst pistol shot on earth, but there are sportsmen down here in South America who can run me close. Yes, Señor Serro."

Serro came running back to him from a cross-road, blue-faced and frightened.

"There is some slight disturbance—down there, captain. And it might be advisable—to go round some other way.

They have stationed a machine-gun——"

"*Pr-r-r-r-r-r-r-umph!*" said a Maxim, and a gust of bullets sang down the cross street and broke glass that tinkled somewhere in the distance.

"If you will come with me, captain, I—will lead you to the general another way. We need—not run."

"I was not going to suggest running," said McTurk placidly. "I thought you said your revolution was a thing accomplished? You don't seem to have got all the votes in yet."

"It is nearly over. We are quieting them down."

"With Maxim's soothing-sirup. Well, Don Jaime, who is it you want to introduce me to?"

"The general commanding. We shall name him president of Venezuela tomorrow."

"Won't do," said Commander McTurk. "I guess it's your yesterday's president I'm consigned to. Where's he?"

Don Jaime grinned spitefully. "I'm afraid, captain, your walk-is wasted if that's the man you want. He is on his way to Paris; and though he has taken with him all the contents of our treasury he could lay hands upon, I do not think that if you did come across him in France he would still be a buyer of torpedo-boat destroyers. Much better take the offer I have made."

"I am going to convince myself that you are the legitimate successors of my consignees before I part, Señor Serro, so take me the nearest way to your general's house."

"*Pr-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-umph!*" snapped the Maxim at their elbows, as they turned off down the side street.

The present writer forgets the name of the general commanding at Santa Barbara whom Señor Serro named as president designate of Venezuela, but it does not especially concern this tale, as Commander J. K. McTurk never met him. When he arrived at the house the general, it was announced, was "out pacifying the town," and McTurk wondered whether he was in any way concerned with that garrulous Maxim, and

if so, whether he was stationed at the breech or the muzzle end.

But there was little leisure just then for mere academic speculation. He was shown into a room—a council-room, by appearance—in which some score of patriots were all talking together with enthusiastic noise and excitement. Their tongue was the local Spanish patois, and Commander McTurk had little enough of it.

By way of keeping their concerns private from the outside world, the windows of the room were most closely shuttered, but the place was lit with raw, unshaded electrics which showed up every man's face with unkind clearness.

For ten minutes or so the din was overpowering, but then came a lull, and Serro took advantage of it to introduce the visitor and state his business.

Thereupon the uproar again broke out with renewed vigor. It appeared there were two parties in the room. Commander McTurk did not know who they might be, or what were their political opinions; he was quite in a mist as to whether either of them represented the current government or the government of yesterday; but he understood very clearly that both sides wanted the *Bolívar*, and that both sides with equal vehemence claimed her as theirs by right.

At last one patriot smote another with finger-tips across his passionate face, and two revolvers were plucked out and fired. Neither of the shooters was touched, but a man by the door coughed queerly and collapsed, as though the body had suddenly been extracted from his clothes.

On the instant it appeared that every person in the place had a weapon in his hand and was preparing to use it, but at that point some one got hold of the master-switch, and out went all the lights.

After the fierce electric glare, the black, velvety darkness in that room seemed almost palpable. There was an instantaneous rustle of movement: every man instinctively moved till his back was up against a wall; and then

there was a frozen silence, while each listened for his neighbor's breath so as to get an idea where he was.

Commander J. K. McTurk was one of the bravest men I ever met, but he owned to me freely that when those lights went out he was for the moment desperately scared.

He held the war-ship which both parties eagerly wanted; he was in the position of the grain of corn between the upper and nether millstone; and every second he expected to feel the scald of cold steel scouring between his ribs, or to cringe before the sear of a bullet.

But, in spite of what he says, I gather that he was too old a hand to be upset for long. He stretched out a long, cautious hand on either side of him to—as he said—take soundings. On one flank he touched the plush of a turned-back Spanish cloak; on the other he fumbled against a hand and the haft of a knife. By the movement of the air—or by instinct, more likely—he felt that hand uplifted to strike. He gripped it in mid-air. With his other hand he gripped the body to which it was attached, and then, using all of his enormous strength, he lifted up the man and hurled him through the darkness to the opposite side of the room. And at that point some one's nerves gave way, and in came the lights again.

A dozen threatening faces were turned toward the American. "You have killed Señor Serro," one of them cried at him.

"Serro, was it?" said McTurk coolly. "I couldn't tell by the smell of him in the dark. Some one tried to stick cutlery into me, and I manhandled him. Natural, I guess. And, anyway, he's not dead. I'll do as much for any of you other gentlemen, if you'll kindly come round here and interfere with me. But while we are on the subject of Serro, I want to know if he's to have my ship? He came to me with a yarn about representing your government, and I must say he had got enough dollars to make some sort of a backing to his tale. But I deliver the *Bolívar* only to the parties who contracted for her, or their legitimate successors."

An old white-headed man stood forward and waved his compatriots into silence. "Señor Captain McTurk," he said, "if you are not too nervous to dine here and sleep——"

"Oh, there's no nervousness about me, thanks."

"Good. Then I shall myself have the honor to wake you early to-morrow morning, and you shall see the remaining members of the late government finally abdicate. Then, as our party will be in power without opposition, I suppose it will satisfy you that we are the government."

"That will do for me."

"And you will hand over the *Bolívar* without further discussion?"

"Glad to be quit of her, señor."

"Señor Captain, I honor you as showing the sound, practical sense of your nation." He looked at his watch. "Dinner has been spoiling for three-quarters of an hour. If it please you, we will now go and sit down, before it gets further over-cooked."

Commander McTurk slept that night as a sailor sleeps. He got the maximum of rest out of each minute, but he was ready on the instant to spring into complete wakefulness if any alarm was given. However, the city seemed to slumber—perhaps the Maxims had lulled its turbulent politicians to rest—and the most of the night passed without disturbance. Still, day had not yet dawned when the white-haired old man came to wake him.

"I'll be with you in ten minutes," said McTurk.

"Pardon, but it is a moment for hurry, señor."

"Can't help it," said McTurk. "I don't turn out unwashed and ungroomed for anybody in South America."

"By the way," he added, when they met, "I never caught your name last night."

"Jose Serro."

"By Glory! Any relation?"

"It was my son you threw across the room."

"Of course you know he—well—we disagreed?"

"I know exactly what happened, and

what you did was the natural thing, and for it I do not blame you. My son was in the wrong: he put his personal feelings before his public duty. Now, with me, personal feelings come second."

"I see. Then——"

"Captain McTurk is of use to my country. He holds a war-ship that we want. Therefore"—the old gentleman bowed his white head courteously—"it is the duty of every patriot to hold Captain McTurk unhurt in spite of any provocation he may offer."

"But once you get the *Bolivar*," Commander McTurk reminded himself privately, "you'd cut my throat, you old duck! with all the pleasure in a Christmas tea-party. Well, it's a queer climate down here."

They went out through many sounding whitewashed corridors, and at last came to a great, square courtyard at the back of the house. Dawn was just about to break, and the air was full of chill.

There were soldiers in the courtyard, rifle-armed, and drawn up in line; and in a second or so, when Commander McTurk's eyes were attuned to the gloom, he saw that against the farther wall was another row of men, two of them drooping on chains, the rest standing. But one and all were bound. It flashed upon him that he had been brought out to witness an execution of all members of the late government who had fallen into the hands of those who had now seized the power.

He put a word to Señor Serro, and found that this was so.

"By Glory!" said McTurk to the old man, "you've got a queer notion of humor, turning me out first thing in the morning to see this sort of entertainment."

Don Jose shrugged. It was plain which side of the house Don Jaime had inherited his shrug from. "Captain McTurk must thank himself. My son offered the only settlement that we thought an American would care about, some hours ago now."

"Then you judged Yankee tastes wrong," Commander McTurk rasped

out. "Here's the dawn beginning to light up, and one can see things a bit. May I say a word to that end man but one on the right-hand side?"

"Most certainly. We wish, Señor Captain, to offer you every possible courtesy."

McTurk stalked across with long, rapid strides. "Ah, I thought so! You seem to have got yourself into an ugly place, Von Ralle!"

"Hello, that you, McTurk? So you've managed to chip in with the winning side, have you?"

"It looks like it. But I hate to see you up against this wall."

"I don't fancy the berth myself."

"Well," said McTurk thoughtfully. "I don't quite know how much power I've got at court just now, but I'm open to straining it a trifle—er—for the sake of a fee."

Von Ralle stared. "You're not after money: I know you well enough for that. But you'd better tell me. I'm too dished-up to guess riddles just now."

"I'm buying Santa Barbara Waterworks stock. Presuming you have still got your holding of a month ago——"

"I have. Well?"

"If I get you clear of this will you sign me a transfer for ten per cent. of your holding?"

The man against the wall gave a cackle of laughter. "And so you're still fool enough to dangle after Mrs. Lucy Codrington, are you? Well, McTurk, if that's your idea of bliss, you can have the stock, though I warn you I'm buying my life for what's no better than waste-paper. My God, but there's the sun! I didn't think I should ever see it again."

It was a very pleased Mrs. Codrington that Commander McTurk dined with that night for the last time on the destroyer, and so frequent was their laughter that Mr. Neil Angus McTodd—who regarded himself in the light of a chaperon—felt often obliged to lift a skylight and cough down a warning for more seemly behavior.

"And you think," said the lady, "that

this Serro creature will actually play honest? My dear J. K., you're more than a genius if you can make him do that. You'd better pay up that two and a half dollars you bet me I shouldn't win."

"Well," said McTurk complacently, "I've got a very nice little hold on him, as I've explained to you. Here's your money. I never enjoyed losing a bet more."

"I don't wonder that Herr von Ralle gave up his controlling shares so easily."

"I guess Von Ralle finds the climate of Venezuela doesn't agree with him one little bit. Well, Lucy, you own more than half of the Santa Barbara Water-works stock now, and you've got a guarantee that they'll pay their rates, and I think that's all you asked for in return for——"

"Hush," said Mrs. Codrington coyly. "There's Mr. McTodd coughing again."

"He's coughing whisky; I noticed, the old soaker! Confound McTodd! Here, Lucy, you've just got to marry me, and that's the end of it."

She turned to him and put her hand in his. "I will, J. K., on one condition. Stay here with me in Santa Barbara, and help me run these water-works."

Commander McTurk's big hand trembled. Commander McTurk's face paled as much as nature would allow. "But, Lucy," he pleaded; "my profession? You know how desperately anxious I am to get back on the active list of the navy, and if I put in time down here, the chance might slip away. You know what the navy is to me."

"And you know what these water-works are to me, J. K. I am a woman, and this is my first big financial win. You can't ask me to desert it."

Commander McTurk looked at the hand that lay in his, and felt that the wrench of his two desires was almost greater than he could bear. From above the chief engineer regarded him with a bibulous eye.

Then the skylight opened, and a waft of whisky came down, and discipline had to be asserted.

Commander McTurk jumped to his feet. "You dissolute mechanic," he shouted. "I'll teach you to misbehave yourself on this ship," and with that he rushed out on deck.

Lucy Codrington dropped her face into her hands. "Oh!" she said, "if I don't take great care I shall lose him yet. Oh, J. K., you darling, come back!"



DIDN'T WANT THANKS

OWING to the wretched weather visitors were remarkably scarce at a certain inland pleasure resort last summer, and in this connection an amusing story is told. A pair of young fellows chartered a boat and went for a row on the river. Apparently tiring of their exertions, they suddenly dropped the oars and proceeded to amuse themselves by rocking the boat in midstream.

A number of ladies on the banks were horrified, which only seemed to spur the jokers on to more reckless deeds. They redoubled their efforts until what might have been expected happened—over went the boat.

Then it was seen that neither of the precious pair could swim, and they would certainly have been drowned but for the proprietor of the boat yard, who put off and dragged them into his boat.

One of the now terrified youths proceeded to stammer out his thanks, but was promptly pulled up by the rescuer.

"Don't thank me," he growled. "Thank the weather. Visitors is so scarce this year that we can't afford even to let fools drown!"

At the Court of the Maharaja

By Louis Tracy

Author of "Karl Grier," "The Wings of the Morning," Etc.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED.

Kate Forsyth, an English girl, marries a Hindu prince named Gopal Singh, who soon afterwards succeeds to the throne of Barapore, a native Indian state. In India Kate makes several friends, among them Sir Charles and Lady Grandison, Colonel Farrington, Judge Tennant, and Mrs. Mold, but her life there is not at all as pleasant as she had expected it would be. She finds that natives, even when titled, are not received on terms of equality by people of the white race, and, soon after her arrival in Barapore, she has two narrow escapes from assassination—a fate suffered by the previous maharaja and his son. Her life is rather dreary, on the whole, and she rather looks forward to the arrival in India of her friend, Marion Forbes, with whom Captain Richard Ayriss, of the Fourteenth Bengal Lancers, is in love. Gopal Singh is kind to Kate, in a way, but his dissolute life shocks her, and it is finally the cause of a quarrel between them.

CHAPTER XII.

IN THE IDES OF MARCH.



HE talk in the native cavalry mess at Ambala was all of the plague and its uncanny trick of breaking out in unexpected localities. So long as the "quick death" confined

its ravages to Bombay there was no anxiety throughout the rest of India. The explanation of this close affection of the disease for Bombay was simple and satisfactory—to the rest of India.

The great city of the western coast stood on a low island. The excessive use of water, combined with the unsanitary habits of a million inhabitants, had, after many generations, converted the island into a gigantic cesspool, by gradually raising the sunken water-level.

Here was theory, historical and dogmatic, hand in hand with practise, the plague. Two years of experience made the proposition definite—an article of faith reliable as the moon's quarters. Even Bombay accepted the inevitable and agreed to whitewash its interiors.

Just to show that the East survived, two or three English magistrates were murdered at Poona and elsewhere, and the governor was compelled to fix an hour for certain British war-ships to shell the Mazagon bazaar.

This latter sort of interference with the home life of the native was too much for the digestion of even the most enthusiastic Brahman. He did not mind others being hanged, but indiscriminate shrapnel was really absurd, so whitewash was accepted—as a compromise.

But, alas! the day came when men sickened and died from bubonic fever in Calcutta, Delhi, Multan, and Lahore—when Kalka, the threshold of that lofty sanctuary, Simla, had to be guarded like a French *octroi* station lest the infection should climb even to the foot of Jakko.

The Bombay "water-logging" theory required revision, yet the plague spread, and with it marched crass ignorance, famine, and fanatical resistance. Each district began to hide its dead and defy the whitewash of government in its own way. Englishmen toiled with bulldog persistence to save the native from the effects of his own stupidity. They ar-

gued with him, strove to convince him by sheer force of example, occasionally sabered him when he rose in frenzied riot; and, as a final sacrifice, more than twenty devoted members of the Indian Civil Service laid down their lives in one year in the vain effort to avert the self-imposed doom of the millions entrusted to their care.

No wonder that Ambala discussed the plague—not seriously, of course, for grim death himself is treated flippantly in India, but with speculative eye for the probable course of events.

The regimental song-maker—a variety artist who could smoke, sing, and vamp a first-class accompaniment at the same time—had just regaled his lounging hearers with a ditty entitled “The Place Where the Punkah-Coolie Died.” In response to a call for more—it was a guest night, and the diners were complaisant—he gave them “a little thing of his own.” Being topical, it dealt with the all-pervading subject.

Rattling off a one-two-three-four strum on the piano, he sang:

I've bin sojerin' in India just a year,
An' it seems to be a very funny thing
That many a wicked clip be'ind the ear
Is got in fightin' subjects of the king.
It's a lickin' when you comes to think it out,
That to 'elp a chap you knock 'im on the 'ead.
Oh, it's ketch 'im, an' it's stretch 'im—to the
doctor's quarters fetch 'im—
Even if you 'ave to fill 'im up with lead.

“How is it,” inquired the pulpit tones of a newly joined *padri*, or clergyman, “that all verses ascribed to Thomas Atkins are couched in the cockney dialect?”

“It is one of the laws of Kipling,” answered the colonel, hastily forestalling a ribald subaltern. But fate willed that the subaltern’s chance should come. The curate happened to hear him bemoaning the loss of a favorite groom, and promptly intervened.

“Our mission compound is crowded just now. We have several grooms there. Won’t you——”

“What! Take a native Christian! No fear.”

“But why not?”

“Because ’tis better to stumble on the path than be upheld by thieves and murderers.”

The apt quotation amazed the other; it even annoyed him.

“You seem to understand the letter more than the spirit of the precept,” he said.

“Now, look here, Mr. Jenkins. How many native Christian servants have you in the Clergy House?”

“Really, I have not—er—inquired.”

“Then do so. They are such poisonous blackguards that those who know them best are the last to employ them. I’ll bet you a gold mohur——”

“I never wager,” said the offended ecclesiastic, stalking across the room. But he made the suggested inquiry later, and found that out of fifteen servants in the Clergy House only three were converts—employed to roll and water the garden! Every domestic in whom trust was reposed was either a Mahommedan or a Hindu.

An orderly entered, carrying the yellow envelope that denotes the “urgent” telegram of India, and handed it to the colonel, who paused in the act of lighting a cigar in order to learn the result of a pony race at Lucknow. Captain Ayriss’ mare, *Flamengo*, was entered, and the regiment were on it to a man. So assured were the others that the race supplied the text of the message that conversation was momentarily suspended while the chief read it.

Even the Reverend Jenkins detected a wandering look in the major’s eyes, and suspended a strong and convincing argument whereby he proved conclusively that the recent success of the local mission was wholly due to the efforts of bazaar preachers and not to the pinch of famine.

But the colonel’s face suddenly assumed its “boot-and-saddle” expression. He turned to the adjutant.

“Captain Ayriss is orderly officer for the day, is he not?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Bring him to my quarters at once.”

He strode across the room, but stopped for a moment to speak to the

"commissioner"—the civil head of an Indian district.

"There is a deuce of a row in Barapore over the plague inspection measures enforced by the maharaja," he said. "I am ordered from Lahore to send a squadron of cavalry there immediately, by troop-train and forced marches. I expect——"

"That orders will await me at my bungalow? Yes? Well, as a matter of fact, I have been ready for this row during the past week. My camp is loaded into bullock-wagons at Deoli. They will be miles on the road when the troop-train gets there."

"My dear fellow, why on earth didn't you warn me?"

"Because it was sheer guesswork on my part. You see, I know the maharani. Three months ago she was joined by a strong-minded young person, a Miss Marion Forbes, who has taken a degree in medicine. Between them they must have tried to sanitise Barapore, and you know what that means."

Bugles rang out over the parade-ground, lights flashed, orders, brief and decisive, produced from dim interiors a torrent of half-naked Mahommedan troopers, and, in less than an hour, one hundred and fifty fully armed and accoutred *sowars* were riding to the railway-station, leading with them fifty spare horses, and followed by light baggage and ammunition carts.

The Fourteenth Bengal Lancers prided themselves on their extreme mobility and their instant readiness in the matter of transport. One hour and a half after the receipt of the telegram the colonel sent off his reply to the military authorities:

The squadron has left this station for Deoli, and is timed to reach there at four-thirty.

Major Cunningham, a man who had twice won the Dholpore Cup for pig-sticking, commanded the column. His second in command was Captain Ayriss, and there were two other British officers, Lieutenants Boyd and Wilkinson. The men were all Punjabi Mahommedans, whiskered swaggerers who

would cheerfully cut every Hindu throat in the peninsula. Thus does Britain govern India—*divide et impera. pera.*

In the cigar-lit quietude of the train, in the preparation of which the railway officials vied for speed and proficiency with the Lancers, forgetting only to put oil in the lamps, Tennant explained to his military friends some recent developments in Barapore.

"After some exciting episodes at the outset," he said, "the maharani succeeded in making herself very popular. She accepted the inevitable, and practically lives apart from her husband. She not only made rapid progress with the language, but ingratiated herself with the natives by a clever adaptation of her dress on state occasions to ideas consonant with their notions of ceremony. The wife of Narayan Singh, a rival claimant of the *guddi*, fell ill from fever, and the maharani nursed her and cured her, resolutely spending several days alone in the midst of her enemies. Then, again, the son of the maharaja by his first wife was in charge of a dangerous old lunatic, his grandmother, known locally as the Tonahi-Jan, or Witch-Spirit. The maharani insisted that he should be brought to the palace and treated with all the distinction due to his rank. The boy has become very much attached to her, but his existence may easily cause grave trouble in the future, now that another youngster of the male persuasion has put in an appearance. However, everything was going on smoothly, to all outward appearance, and in ten years' time Barapore might have become as modernized as Baroda, with an English woman as regent, when this infernal plague swept through the Punjab and unsettled the people more than any event since the Mutiny. It is possible, too, that the presence of this Miss Forbes, with her class-room notions of twentieth-century hygiene——"

"You need have no fear of Miss Forbes as a disturbing agent," put in Ayriss quietly. "She is a very sensible girl, and she knows India better than the maharani."

"Do you know her?" was the surprised comment.

"Yes. I met her several times—in London."

"Oh! I am glad to hear she will be helpful rather than the reverse, as I feared."

"The fact is"—explained Dick slowly—"the root of all the mischief is not plague, or the succession, or hostility to the English maharani, but Russian intrigue."

Tennant alone did not join in the chorus of laughing unbelief.

"What do *you* know about it?" he asked; and there was that in his voice which silenced the scoffers.

"Nothing beyond what Mar—Miss Forbes told me."

"I—er—understood that the lady's name is Marion," said Wilkinson, the sporting subaltern.

"There must be a rat in this carriage," murmured Boyd.

"The next compartment is empty," said the major; and Ayriss was allowed to proceed.

"There is no reason for concealment in the matter. Miss Forbes and I will be married next October."

Wilkinson groaned deeply. He foresaw the collapse of the regimental polo team, but Cunningham stopped protests and congratulations alike by saying:

"I am sorry I took you by surprise to-night, Ayriss. I wondered why the deuce you looked so queer when I told you that there was a row at Barapore."

Instantly the thoughts of each man present flew forward to the crowded city by the lake, distant yet two whole days of rapid marching. They knew what a fearful thing is the fanaticism of the East when thoroughly aroused; its excesses, its tigerish barbarism. What if already the mob were triumphant and the palace in their hands! There was a thrilling silence while they listened to the rhythmic throbbing of the engine speeding onward through the night.

"The advance-guard can push ahead," murmured Wilkinson. "With led horses we could——"

"What of Russia, Ayriss?" broke in Tennant. It was best to avoid discussing possibilities.

"Only this—there can be no doubt that Barapore is, or was, one of the few native states in which disorder could be readily stirred up in the event of the long-deferred battle on the Helmund. Money was forthcoming liberally for bribes, and Umrao Singh, the commander-in-chief, is popularly supposed to be the ringleader of the pro-Russian faction. The late maharaja and the dewan were got rid of because they were unswervingly loyal. It is practically certain that Gopal Singh, before he came to the throne, and after his accession, too, received large sums through the Russian embassy in London. I myself saw him leaving it late at night within a few hours of the news of the Barapore murders reaching town. Recently, however, he has changed his tune."

"Does loyalty pay best, then?" asked the major.

"Miss Forbes attributes the change to other motives. His wife's influence counts for something, of course. The moment she heard a word of the position of affairs she insisted on a thorough repudiation of Umrao Singh and his intrigues. Then, again, he is waxing fat, and likes to avoid trouble. The viceroy, too, gave Gopal Singh a very cordial reception at Calcutta last cold weather, and Kate Maharani fairly dazzled the vice-regal set by her diamonds and good looks. She is a beauty, I believe."

"Haven't you seen her?" said Tennant.

"Oh, yes. I met her—with Miss Forbes—in town."

"Go on with the yarn, Ayriss," cried Boyd. "Yours is a bad case, evidently."

"It is believed—there is a sort of impression—that the maharaja has paid back the money advanced to him by Russia, stoutly maintaining that it was a loan, bearing ordinary interest, and in the same shadowy way the corollary is that three or four lakhs of rupees have returned to the state for the express

purpose of removing him from the throne."

"He is to be hoist by his own coin, in fact," said Boyd.

"It is a beastly error to pay anybody," growled Wilkinson. "I sent my tailor a check on account the other day, and he had the cheek to write back and say that unless the balance——"

"How did Miss Forbes ascertain her information with such remarkable accuracy?" inquired the commissioner.

"She is well up in Persian," explained Dick. "She can read and write the Skikast, and there is no doubt that she has learned from the natives sufficient to elucidate all that her friend told her. She has been in Barapore four months now, having come out last November—and the theories I have given you are gathered from her most recent letters."

"By Jove!" broke in Wilkinson, "I remember now that you took a mysterious trip to Ghaziabad early in the cold weather. I wondered at the time what it was that brought you to that God-forsaken hole. Of course you went to waylay the girl."

Dick smiled in the darkness. His comrade's absurd choice of a word had a ring of actuality about it. Waylay—that was exactly what he had done. After much map-studying and brow-knitting, Marion sent him a telegram before she left Bombay:

Passing through Ghaziabad at eleven-thirty.

He was an old friend, and Ghaziabad was reasonably near to Ambala—on the map. Of course he journeyed thither by an unnecessarily early train. He paced the platform for hours, wondering what he should say, how he could utilize those precious twenty minutes to assure himself that he had not been fostering a year-long delusion. He made miserable the lives of Kellner & Co.'s manager and the refreshment-room cook in striving to achieve a *ménu* far removed from the everlasting chicken hot and chicken cold, chicken soup and chicken curry of the average Indian station.

At long last the train came, and in it Marion, shyly ensconced in a reserved compartment. He tore open the door and sprang into the inner obscurity. She, trembling somewhat, with quick waves of color darkening her sun-browned face, held out the hand of conventionality, but utterly forgot to utter the quiet words of greeting she had prepared. He, too, was dumb. He grasped the outstretched hand, and felt that it was tremulous, fluttering, so unlike the chill self-possession he had feared to meet. And then, without spoken syllable, they flung themselves into each other's arms, until he found voice to murmur that she was his darling and dearest and sweetest, and she could tell him that she had finally made up her mind never to marry any one other than himself.

And all this time a frantic Khan-samah was beseeching the *sahib* to remember that the train only waited twenty minutes, and the *miss-sahib* had to eat a meal of six courses, specially cooked for her.

Not a morsel of food did she touch. Some of the dishes and a bottle of wine were brought to the carriage and left there. When the guard's whistle blew, Dick kissed her again, and looked at the happiness in her tearful eyes.

"I suppose I am to consider myself engaged." It was a weak attempt at audacity; and the break in her voice thrilled him.

"That is what I meant to convey," he answered, disregarding an official protest, and squeezing her again while he stood on the foot-board.

"There, there!" she cried. "I don't want you to kill yourself to convince me. You must live now, for my sake."

Those were her parting words. The condition of Upper India since Marion went on to Barapore had absolutely stopped all chance of a single day's absence from duty for government servants. "It was dashed hard," said Boyd, "that a fellow couldn't even go to Lucknow to see that *Flamengo* wasn't doped by a groom."

Ayriss did not notice, in his reverie, that his companions had ceased talking.

Finally, the irrepressible Wilkinson struck a match and held it close to Dick's face.

He made a rapid pass or two in mesmeric fashion.

"Hey!" he cried. "Fire! Murder! Perlice! Come back from Ghaziabad! Tell us more about these treasons, spoils, and stratagems at Barapore."

Dick laughed and sought a fresh cigar.

"My budget is ended. Ask Tennant for the latest news."

"Saving the fact that a week ago the maharaja warned Lahore that he expected trouble with a small section of his subjects, I know no more than you," said the commissioner.

"Do you expect any orders at Saharunpore?" inquired Cunningham.

"Most decidedly. My present instructions are beautifully vague. I am to advise and help the maharaja, owing to Colonel Byng's absence on sick leave, and you are to act as my escort."

Saharunpore did not yield much in the shape of additional instructions save the interesting item that the Holi Festival, or Feast of Light, when all good Hindus decorate their houses, within and without, with multi-colored lamps, would take place on March 22, and a religious disturbance might possibly take place that night. It was then the early morning of the twenty-first. The telegram concluded:

The lieutenant-governor hopes that you and your escort will reach Barapore before nightfall. Your arrival will probably be quite unexpected by the populace. If stern measures are needed to repress disorder let them be taken promptly and thoroughly, but, if possible, act always in the name and with the authority of the maharaja. His honor trusts entirely to your discretion to restore order speedily and unostentatiously.

"In other words," commented Major Cunningham, "you may get a 'Thank you' if all goes well, but you will be publicly flogged if questions are asked in Parliament, and some radical idiot from Manchester or South Wales gives the home government a hot bath over it."

Tennant sighed. "I wouldn't care so much," he said wearily, "if only the

idiot himself could accompany us during the next forty-eight hours."

To-morrow night! By making sixty miles a day it was just possible for the small force to reach Barapore before sunset on the second day. Ayriss set his teeth and looked fixedly at a group of Pathan horse-dealers squatted on the platform in picturesque dirtiness.

A porter relighted the carriage-lamps, and the tribesmen, border ruffians and horse copers, suddenly awoke to the fact that the train was filled with troops. They stood up and gazed fixedly at the British officers. In their bearing was none of the docile subserviency that marks the average native of India. These men were stalwart, muscular, hairy scoundrels; free and wild as the air of their mountain fastnesses.

Their black eyes, long, hooked noses, unkempt hair and flowing garments likened them more to Bedouins than Asiatics, and the steady glances they exchanged with the Englishmen seemed to say:

"We understand each other. You are good fighters, but we are better. Sometimes you make us play at being good by force of your numbers and your long-range guns, but you can never subdue us."

So calmly defiant was their attitude that Wilkinson and Boyd, not accustomed to the swaggering contempt of the Afridi for all but his own kith and kin, were very much annoyed by it. They did not perceive that Ayriss was really the object of the tribesmen's fixed stare, and when a favorable opportunity offered, Wilkinson grinned fiendishly at them and placed his thumb to the end of his nose, wagging his fingers quickly the while.

To his horror, one of the Afridis, a splendidly built fellow, who might serve as a model for Judas Maccabeus, came forward and spoke to Ayriss in sonorous Pushtu, a language which none of the others understood.

After a vigorous conversation the mountaineer produced from some recess of his voluminous robes a superb piece of turquoise embedded in its native matrix. The stone was as big as

a pigeon's egg on its polished side, and absolutely flawless. After some demur, Ayriss accepted it. The Afridi salaamed with a courtly grace that still claimed equality. He glanced at Wilkinson with a smile, and said something before he strode back to rejoin his fellows.

"Hello, Jimmy," cried Ayriss; "what have you done to annoy him? He asks me to tell you that if ever you show your ape-face across the border you will be made to grin through a donkey's bridle."

Wilkinson, of course, was duly amazed, though he winked expressively at the Afridi. The others, curious to learn the meaning of the little transaction they had just witnessed, paid no heed to him.

"I met that chap in the Barah Valley," explained Dick modestly. "My revolver was empty, and I was too near to permit him to reload his Martini, so we fought it out fairly, Sheffield steel against Kabulese tulwar. His weapon snapped close to the hilt, and I spared his life. I liked the beggar's style. You should have seen the way in which he straightened himself and dropped his hands to take the thrust he would certainly have given me under the same conditions. So I let him go, and he has not forgotten me. He pressed this turquoise upon me as a memento, and at the same time assured me that the next time we meet in the neighborhood of Tirah his blade will not break."

"An extraordinary race," said Tennant. "I wonder if Russia counts the cost when she attempts to cross the Hindu Khush. The Afghans will give her trouble enough, but these mountaineers might easily repel her without our striking a blow should we decide to defend Quetta, the Indus, and Peshawur, and not advance to the Helmund."

"I once saw seven of them, in a hill fort, hold back half a battalion of sepoy for two hours," said Ayriss. "They killed twenty-four rank and file and one officer—poor Grant of the 29th—before they were rushed and bayoneted to the last man."

So Jimmy surreptitiously blew a kiss

to the group of vagabond swashbucklers as the train steamed out of the station, and they deigned to smile dryly at him, with sour consciousness that the older sahibs had been telling him he was vainly mocking better men than himself.

At Deoli, as day dawned, they found a messenger from the maharaja—a dusty and worn Rajput, who drew from his turban a note addressed to "The Officer in Command." Cunningham passed it to Tennant with the dry comment:

"Some definite news at last."

The letter was brief and terribly in earnest:

Come here with the utmost haste. Narayan Das has died from the plague. His widow, unveiled, has gone through the bazaar demanding vengeance. The palace is barricaded and some of my retainers may prove faithful. All well as yet, but an attack will certainly be made when night falls.

They all knew the weird significance of these few sentences. To the Anglo-Indian each phrase meant a volume. They separated on the platform, each man quietly superintending the orderly unloading of horses and baggage. When they met they spoke briefly, but none addressed Ayriss save in the words of mere routine, for ever and anon his eyes sought the straight tree-lined road that led from over a hundred miles up to the foot-hills of the Himalayas, where nestled Barapore.

Yet strange is the British subaltern. A telegraph peon found Wilkinson with a message, and Jimmy whispered to Boyd:

"Flamengo won the cup. Shall we tell him?"

"Better wait until we reach Barapore. He might curse Flamengo, which would be a pity, for she is a first-rater. How much had you on?"

"Three hundred. Not another pice would Ahsan Beg give me. He is a frightful old scoundrel."

"I think he fixed on a sort of scale; a thousand dibs for the commandant, three hundred for a subaltern, and ten

for a *sowar*—just a month's pay, you see."

"What was the starting price?"

"Don't faint, old chap. Bear it like a man—one hundred to eight against."

"What have I won? Tell me quick. You have a head for figures."

"Three thousand seven hundred and fifty rupees."

"Oh, my sainted aunt! Two glorious months in town! Look out! The major is coming. Was his figure eight hundred?"

CHAPTER XIII.

BECAUSE ONE MAN DIED MANY WERE SLAIN.

In a vast house of secret aspect, situate but a stone's throw from the busy market-place, yet hidden in a labyrinth of narrow alleys, Narayan Das lay dead. Only a few hours earlier he had gone among the people to advise the prompt removal of those stricken by the plague and the thorough cleaning of infected premises. Such were the simple measures insisted upon by Kate Maharani and agreed to by her husband—and Narayan Das said they were wise and judicious measures, which should be encouraged rather than resisted.

His attitude aroused the outspoken condemnation, even the active menaces, of the malcontents. In him were centered the hopes of those to whom Kate's enlightened ideas were anathema, and they bitterly resented the support he gave to the ordinance issued from the palace and half-heartedly enforced by the maharaja's officers. Mahommedan mollah and Hindu fakir alike sunk for once their daily feud and united in cursing the renegade, while the fearsome old hag, the Tonahi-Jan—meeting him in the great square where the pigeons gathered in flocks—withdrew the curtains of her palanquin and shrieked weird malisons.

"Never shalt thou sit on the *guddi* of Barapore!" she croaked, stretching out a withered hand in fierce execration. "There is a blight on thee, and thy days are numbered. Never shall a son arise

to comfort thee or a daughter to do honor to thy name. Go hence, chicken-heart——"

"Nay, mother," he broke in with forced cheerfulness, for the allusion to the fact that his beautiful and accomplished wife—the Hindu lady whose life had been saved by Kate—bore him no children touched him sorely. "Nay, call me not that, whatever else may seem fitting. 'Tis not a cowardly thing to tell the truth when the telling causes friends to fall away, and even those who are my kindred to hide their faces when I approach."

"Thou hast a plausible tongue, Narayan Das, but thy liver is white like the skin of the woman who has brought death to Barapore. When before have the people hungered? Why are the shutters up in the shops of the grain-dealers? There is woe in the bazaar, and death in every house. Men wither and die, and the grain rots in the soil. Barapore is accursed—the white witch has cast a spell upon the land."

"Others suffer even more than we do," he replied. "Hunger and plague have visited us in other years."

"It is a lie. They were brought hither by the British Raj to exterminate the people."

A buzz of approval swept through the gathering crowd. They all dreaded this wizened old woman. Her mad wits were supernaturally keen, and she was popularly reputed to be the incarnation of an evil spirit, for none knew whence she came, nor did she in aught resemble any of the mixed nationalities of which the city was composed. Yet her bitter words expressed the belief in their hearts, and they rejoiced in her fearlessness.

Narayan Das gazed around with contemptuous indifference. He shrugged his shoulders and smiled cynically.

"It is written otherwise in the records," he said.

"It is written that thou shalt be among the first to die," she screamed; and those who were nearest cringed lest the baleful spell of her glance should happen to fall next upon them.

But an interruption came. An irreg-

ular squad of mounted men advanced through the crowded street, shouting:

"Make way there for the maharani!"

The mob yielded, and the Tonahi-Jan's palanquin was hustled to one side. A carriage passed at a sharp trot. In it were seated Kate and Marion, going out for their usual evening drive.

Close behind rode the maharaja, somewhat swollen, but still a good horseman, and with him a troop of picked retainers. He thought it best to show a confidence he did not feel. Though he could ill spare even a couple of hours for exercise, he strove to avoid the semblance of secluding himself in the palace, and he had purposely chosen an outward route that led through the bazaar rather than a less crowded road which gave direct access to the nearest gate of the city.

"O-hé!" screeched the old woman. "Seest thou, Narayan Das? She comes! Why not place thy turban beneath her horses' feet?"

Kate heard the cry, and caught sight of the wicked old face glaring at her.

"There she is, Marion," she whispered. "That is the madwoman I told you of."

Marion obtained but a glimpse of the crinkled features and blazing eyes, but they startled her inexpressibly. There is no wonder that in the dark ages men spoke of madness as possession by the devil. The Tonahi-Jan, peering from the somber interior of the palanquin, might well be an evil spirit gazing from the abode of a lost soul.

As the carriage swept on, the maharani recognized Narayan Das. She bowed graciously, and he, though angered and humiliated by the sneering of the mob, salaamed in return. The maharaja, quick to note the character of the gathering, held up a hand to check his escort, and reined in his charger close to his cousin.

"Brother," he said, in a clear voice heard by all, "there is good news to hand to-day. I have bought ten thousand maunds of grain at Lahore, and the first bullock train, carrying five hundred maunds, leaves Deoli to-day.

Soon there will be food in plenty, and seed for the fields."

He dashed on in pursuit of the carriage. For an instant no one spoke, until a veiled figure, wearing a Jain face-mask to prevent the killing of insects by the breath, crept close to the palanquin and hissed a few words to its occupant.

The Tonahi-Jan cackled in loud laughter.

"Yes," she cried, "it is true, brother. The bullocks are yoked; I can hear the groaning of the axles. But it is not grain they bear. It is the food and tents of the redcoats. Gopal Singh fears his people—he does not feed them. The white people are coming to desecrate your homes and pollute your wives and daughters."

The carriage, crossing the square, disturbed the blue-rock pigeons which covered the roadway with an animated carpet. They rose in front of the escort with the whirr of myriad wings. Wheeling overhead with the precision of an aerial regiment of guards, they momentarily shut out the sunlight.

"I didn't think there were so many pigeons in the world," said Marion. "They form a living canopy."

"To-day they remind me of a pall," was the sad answer; for the Maharani of Barapore had come to dread the sight of the Tonahi-Jan.

The palace party returned from their brief outing at half-past six. At seven o'clock the daily camel-post slouched into the market-place with the pace of a fast-trotting horse.

"O-hé, *bhai!*" cried many. "Didst see aught of grain-wagons on the road?"

"Yes, in plenty, and with them the camp of an English commissioner-sahib."

He jingled on, with heavy bounce, and disappeared through the bazaar gate of the palace.

"Which shall we believe?" said the crowd. They wavered in their faith, some inclining to the maharaja, others to the witch.

At eight o'clock the rumor spread that Narayan Das had been taken ill

soon after partaking of his evening meal. At ten he was dead, and his distracted widow was running through the bazaar with unveiled face and the agonized utterances of a woman regardless of all else in the world save her sorrow.

"They have killed my husband," she wailed. "Help me, ye men of Barapore, to take vengeance on his murderers."

Narayan Das had been poisoned, she knew not by what means or by whom. There were those who ran with her who said he was dead from the plague. A native doctor, summoned in all haste, administered an electuary, of which the chief ingredients were pearls and cornelians ground to fine powder. After taking this draft the patient showed signs of imminent dissolution. He vainly strove to say something to his wife, but the fresh torture of the doctor's compound, added to the eviscerating effects of the poison, conquered his powers of resistance, and he succumbed within a few minutes.

The news of his death—the sight of a high-caste Hindu woman exhibiting her tear-stricken face and naked breasts in the public ways—moved the uncertain mob as little else could have moved it.

Narayan Das was dead from the plague—Narayan Das had been killed—Narayan Das had been given the plague by his enemies—and who were his enemies if not the occupants of the palace? Then the old witch was right. His hours were numbered! He would be among the first to die! Those were her words. And now his wife was running undraped through the bazaar. What man was safe? Whose house sacred?

Brothers, should these things be permitted? Whether the name of God be Allah or Khuda, let ancient feuds be forgotten, and common cause be made against the new and unknown dangers brought by the sahibs from beyond the black water. Ah, those terrible sahibs, even now marching from Deoli—what cared they for the wise laws of Manu, or the fierce gospel of the Koran?

It was said—and there were those who paid good rupees for fostering the belief—that other sahibs were even now advancing through the northern hills to smite the English and drive them back into the sea. Anyhow, the great Brahman of Paniput had prophesied that the rule of the English would last only a hundred years, and the allotted century of British government was already completed.

There must be a change. The Kismat of the East demanded an upheaval, a social earthquake by which the rich would become poor, and the poor rich. Brothers, we are the poor. Then follow Narayan Das' wife to the palace gates, and perchance there may be looting to-night, who knows!

It was no part of the plan which removed the pretender when he became a loyalist that his distraught widow should receive protection and consolation in the abode of Gopal Singh. When near to the palace gates she was hustled into a palanquin and swiftly borne away, while the cry went forth that she had been seized and maltreated by the Rajput guard. A revolver startled the tremulous air, a massive door of teak and iron was slammed with the loud clang of urgency, and in an incredibly short space of time the city of Barapore was in a state of revolt against its ruler; the maharaja besieged in his palace by his subjects.

Not that men were shooting or stabbing—as yet. Confusion, uncertainty, wild-eyed rumor were jumbling brains in a mad whirl. Amid the vortex, a few clear intellects strove to direct the swaying currents to suit their own ends. One of these eddies centered round the maharaja—for neither drink nor revelry could cloud his wits—the other found its rock in the bulky person of Umrao Singh.

It was significant that while the head of the state was marshaling his army to arrest an incipient rebellion, the titular leader of the state troops should be absent from the palace. A messenger sent in hot haste to summon him was clubbed to death before he had traversed fifty yards of the bazaar, and his torn

and blood-stained uniform, wrapped round a stone, was thrown into the stable courtyard.

When the poor wretch's fate became known, the maharaja ordered an instant muster of his Rajput and Sikh retainers. These, with a number of Mahomedans, were the only men he could trust within the walls. Every other native, save a few servants, was summarily thrust forth into the bazaar.

With the rest, dealt more blows than most to expedite his departure, was the messenger who met Tennant and the Lancers at Deoli. Promised a rich reward if he faithfully performed his task, the ruse of suspected disaffection secured his safety at the hands of the mob, and the man rode the hundred and twenty miles in ten hours, for on the post-road the maharaja's orders still remained all-powerful.

Marion Forbes, in this hour of perplexity, gave counsel that would have saved Barapore.

"Scour the streets at the head of fifty troopers," she said to the maharaja. "Strike terror at once to the hearts of the malcontents, and if you have reason to suspect Umrao Singh as the leader of the outbreak bring him here a prisoner."

"Those are violent measures," he answered dubiously. "They place on my shoulders the onus of beginning to shed blood. My position is not strong enough—"

"It will be far weaker to-morrow if you remain inactive."

"I do not mean in that sense. Government disapproves of native princes exercising drastic powers. When the commissioner reaches us it will be different."

"He will advise you to do, at great loss of life, what may be accomplished now by simply terrifying an excited mob."

"You do not understand. I wish I could do as you suggest, but I cannot, I cannot."

He passed his hand wearily over his eyes, and the girl felt that words were useless. For some hidden reason he was compelled to leave the dragooning

of his lawless subjects to the stronger hand of the British raj. He dared not strike with his own unfettered arm. She pitied him. There are chains stronger than links of steel, and these now girdled his brain.

The night passed in a vigil of suspense, but no further overt act was committed by the mob. When day came there was little outward evidence of the tumult of apprehension that raged in palace and bazaar. The shops of the grain-dealers were closed, but their meager contents had long been hidden from the gaze of the hungry. During the morning, Gopal Singh traversed the square, attended by a strong retinue, to bring the body of Narayan Das to the palace, so that it might be consumed on a pile of cedar-wood in the great courtyard with all the ceremony befitting royal birth.

The body was not to be found. It had been secretly removed, and the house was tenantless save by an old woman, who knew nothing, had seen nothing, could swear to nothing beyond the meager fact that she was bidden by some unknown messenger to keep the doors locked. Umrao Singh, too, had vanished. His servants said that he rode forth before daybreak to hurry up the grain-carts, and thus appease the hunger of the populace.

There was truth in this. It was an adroit move. The *émeute* of the previous night having failed, for want of a leader, to storm the palace, he was forced to find an excuse for absenting himself that day. Another dramatic coup was in preparation, and its success was assured. Meanwhile he would endeavor to divert the food supply to serve his own purposes. It must be Umrao Singh and not the maharaja who would feed the ravenous mob.

The maharaja knew now that time, and time only, was the dominant factor in the situation. Backed by the approval of the British commissioner, and aided by the sabers of the official escort, he could soon reduce Barapore to submission. When the grain-depots were opened and the people fed, these troubled hours would fade like a

mirage, his own position would be consolidated, and his opponents silenced, if not imprisoned or banished.

And so the day wore on, in anxious expectancy, though not without angry portents. Every road to the city was thronged with villagers trooping in to swell the numbers in the densely packed streets. Naked, ash-covered *Yogis*, yellow-robed fakirs, religious mendicants from sacred shrines in the hills, Hindu ascetics of every type and caste, foregathered in the bazaar, talking in a dialect known to few and exciting public interest by their antics rather than their language or appearance. Whence came all the people? Why did they come? What magnet drew them to the fevered city?

At evening, while men watched and waited, the camel-post jingled through the crowd, for it requires volcanic effects to stop routine in India.

"O-hé, *bhai!* what news of the bullock-wagons laden with grain?"

"They rest by the roadside; they are bidden to wait the passing of the *sowars*."

"Holy Ganga! what *sowars*?"

"Those who come by train from Ambala. They ride with the commissioner-sahib."

This intelligence disturbed palace and bazaar alike. Gopal Singh had sent no such order. It was part of some bold move by his rivals, which, for the moment, he could not fathom. In the streets the word passed from man to man that troops were coming to saber them into obedience.

Each hour the plague grew in violence. Within the palace, too, men were lying in delirium, when dark-red tumors swelled out on the glands of the neck and in the arm-pits. The maharaja knew, but did not tell either his wife or Marion. He simply redoubled his promises of rich reward to all who ate his salt in faithful service. Neither in palace nor city did men care much who lived or died. The survivors would see rare times. That sufficed.

In Kate's private apartments four women were gathered. Chandni Bhain, the ayah, held Kate's chubby little

youngster in the light while his mother compared him with an enlargement of a faded miniature of her father. The modern-looking picture had reached her that day by the camel *dak* from a Calcutta firm. She appealed to Marion, to Mrs. Mold, to the ayah, even, to say that the baby was like his grandfather. It was pitiful to hear her.

"Look at his blue eyes, his fair hair! Why, he is the image of dad, even to the very droop of his mouth in the corners. He does not resemble Jack a little bit."

They perforce agreed with her, though Marion understood the secret terror of her friend lest the boy should have a dark skin, and Mrs. Mold could have told her that Eurasian children are often very fair in infancy.

The conceit gave her a transient happiness. Her drawn face relaxed in momentary brightness, and she instantly placed the portrait on a table near the child's cot, so that all beholders might be struck by the similitude between her tiny son and the man in the old-fashioned uniform of a Papal chevalier.

A little native boy of nine years entered the room and ran to Kate. He had a pleasant appearance and nice manners, and looked quite smart in a Fauntleroy suit.

"Rani," he said, clinging to her affectionately, "father told me to come and stay with you. He will not let me remain with the soldiers."

"Though you would prefer their company to ours, eh?"

"No, Rani, dear, not that, but they say there will be a fight to-night, and I want to see it."

"What nonsense the servants do tell you. See, here is a picture of baby's grandfather. Do you like it?"

The young first-born of Barapore looked at the portrait. He was much more self-possessed and acute than an English boy of the same age. He examined the Chevalier Forsyth's presentment with critical glance.

"Was he a maharaja?" he inquired.

"No, dear."

"Oh!"

"Why did you ask?"

"Because father told me that baby will be a maharaja when he grows up, and that I must fight for him when I am a man. As I will be Maharaja of Barapore, I thought perhaps that baby would be a maharaja in the state you came from."

Kate flushed with annoyance, yet a sense of justice choked back the reproof on her lips. The quick-witted boy saw that he had said something wrong.

"I did not mean to offend you, Rani," he cried impulsively. "You can make baby the maharaja here if you like. Was that what father meant? I don't mind, really."

His English was perfect, beyond a slight lisp. His olive face was regular as a Greek statue in its contour, and he differed from the infant in the cot in every detail of form and feature. This boy was slight, sinewy, and supple. The baby promised to grow into a big-boned, strong man. So determined was Kate that her offspring should be entirely English, that she refused to employ a wet-nurse, and nurtured him herself in nature's own fashion.

She kindly patted the boy's head.

"Do not trouble yourself about such matters, Dhial Singh," she said softly. "Try to be good and honorable, and love your little brother, no matter what positions in life you and he occupy."

With darkness came tidings of uncasiness. Men risked their lives to enter the bazaar—probably gained rewards from both sides by impartial treachery—and brought back evidence of armed bands gathering in certain quarters, of scaling-ladders being made, of elephants, with heads armored for door-battering, stationed in neighboring streets. The maharaja did not seem to be greatly perturbed.

"They mean to attack," he said. "Very well, let them try it. Return and bring hither further news, so that we may be ready to meet them."

It was noticed that his tiny garrison, some three hundred fighting men all told, were gathered in the main courtyard, in the precincts of the Diwan-i-Am, or hall of public audience, and on

the walls facing the square. The messengers truly reported these things to the leaders of the rebels, and crept back, shortly before midnight, to warn the maharaja that the bursting of three bombs in the market-place would be the signal for an immediate assault.

To their intense surprise the two spies—palace servants of the sweeper caste—were instantly seized, gagged, bound, and thrown into an empty stable, for every horse had been removed to the gardens on the lake-side.

"I will keep my word," said Gopal Singh grimly, in reply to the mute appealing of their eyes. "You shall be paid every rupee when this fight has ended. Meanwhile, you will be compelled to remain honest."

Some bearded Rajputs, who heard him, laughed loudly at the discomfiture of the unfortunate sweepers. The reason for his action was soon apparent. The loud explosions of the bombs were followed by a pandemonium of noise, a fierce outbreak of yells, a flashing of torches and naked weapons.

Instantly every member of the garrison ran swiftly from gates and parapets toward the main building overlooking the gardens. Soon the foremost assailants, mad with *bhāng* and the dream-glimpse of loot, were tumbling up the ladders placed against the walls, and two giant elephants dealt ponderous blows against the stout gates, loosening stones from the mortar and hinges from their sockets.

Yet not a blow was struck or shot fired by the defenders. None of the rebels were aware of this. The uproar created in the attempt to gain an entrance effectually prevented any lucid idea of actualities reaching those who inspired, and, to some extent, directed the assault. Quickly the main gate yielded. The excited elephants rushed through, trampling to death many who had gained the courtyard by way of the ladders.

Cries of amazement and screams of agony mingled with the din of a thousand men fighting empty air. Yet the horde swept on, through the Diwan-i-Am, the Diwan-i-Khas, and the smaller

pavilions, until the foremost strove to hold back. It was too late. Their yells of terror only acted as an incentive to those in the rear, and some dozens of hapless wretches were pushed into destruction before the truth was realized and the rebels learned that their maharaja at least knew how to defend himself.

Under the conditions of every-day life at Barapore, a broad, uncovered way, flanked by steep walls, led from the public and state apartments of the palace to the zenana. Now, in place of the well-worn stones of the passage, there yawned a wide trench, thirty feet in depth, and at the bottom lay the dark waters of a ditch fed from the lake by a secret channel. In a word, the old builders of the place had cunningly constructed a fortress within a fort, a keep whence the whole of the remainder of the palace was commanded, and to which all means of approach were barred either by stone walls with masonry ten feet in thickness, or by a broad, slimy-walled foss completely hidden in normal times.

Its existence was known but to few, and those who planned the attack little dreamed that Gopal Singh was acquainted with it. He owed the discovery to the fortunate chance that some of his uncle's papers fell into his hands, and among them was a sketch showing the nature of the interior defenses and how to utilize them.

To complete the disastrous repulse thus easily inflicted on the rebels, a couple of loud reports were followed by the fall of two walls which temporarily screened them from full view, and those who escaped injury amid the mass of débris quickly became aware that a hot fusillade from all sorts of firearms was dropping upon them from machicolated casements and crenelated battlements high over their heads.

The rout was even speedier than the assault. Within ten minutes of the signal bombs being fired the outer precincts of the palace were emptied of all save those who could not move and a few maimed miserales, groaning as they crawled. The maharaja had won

the first round against his enemies, and he turned joyfully to Kate, who, at the supreme moment, had ignored the past and stood resolutely by his side.

"That is the end of it," he cried. "There will be no further attack to-night, and by four or five o'clock to-morrow afternoon the troops should be here from Deoli."

Her eyes were shining with the light of a mother called on to defend her young. Gopal Das was quite sober to-night, and, like every good woman, she asked herself if she had helped him sufficiently during the terrible year after their marriage.

"Jack," she cried, with a catch in her voice, "I am proud of you. You are really a ruler of men. Do you know, when you refused to adopt Marion's advice to clear the bazaar last night I almost thought you were afraid!"

It was the first time for many months that she had used the name given him in playful jest. It brought a flush to his dark cheeks. A wave of emotion, of remorse, thrilled him. It was on the tip of his tongue to ask for champagne, but he demanded water instead.

"You are beginning to understand me," he said, lifting a glass to her. "I drink to our reconciliation and the new era!"

But they were both in error. The end was not yet, and Gopal Singh did indeed harbor a great fear, though not of the bazaar mob. He dreaded lest the rising in Barapore might precipitate a calamity of which he was but too well aware, and become the forerunner of events big with the fate of India.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FIERY DEATH.

Much yet remained to be done before the palace could be regarded as fully prepared to resist a further attack. The garrison had, indeed, done wonders in adapting the defensive resources on the city side, but, on two faces of an irregular parallelogram, the city wall either merged itself in the palace or protected the garden from assault.

The weak spot in the fortifications was the scene of the fakir's escape after the attempt to hurl Kate to the crocodiles. The subterranean ditch had its outlet in that locality, but the work of uncovering it must necessarily be performed in the open, and required the unceasing toil of a couple of hundred men for some hours.

Gopal Singh resolved not to expose his small garrison to the danger of a fight at close quarters, when, by sheer numbers, a mob of twenty thousand could sweep aside the most determined opposition. He possessed baulks of timber in abundance, and from these he hastily constructed *chevaux-de-frises* to protect the battlements.

No time was lost in preparing this device. A meal was hastily partaken of, and all hands set to work sawing, hammering, and adjusting the pointed stakes, coarse nails being half driven into the external lengths. From the bazaar came similar sounds, and each section of the belligerents was puzzled to know what the other was doing.

Rebel scouts, creeping among the paddy fields and castor-oil plantations outside the walls, were able to report vaguely as to the defenders' proceedings on the ramparts, but two hours elapsed before a daring Rajput, lowered from a window after having his head shaved in the Jain fashion, came back with a definite explanation of the city's toil.

"By your servant was seen the building of a funeral pile, illustrious ones," he said, for Gopal Singh received him in the presence of Kate and Marion. "It grows in the center of the market-place, and the pieces of sandalwood and aloe already reach to the height of a man."

The maharaja's brows wrinkled.

"What! they build a royal *chita* in the market-place. For whom?"

The messenger laughed. Your true Rajput carries himself easily even before a prince.

"A man born in Jeypore may cause himself to look like a foolish Jain, maharaja, but he cannot talk like one," he answered. "Had I spoken, my tongue might have cost me my eyes."

"It must be the pyre of Narayan Das. Is there aught else?"

"In two courtyards of sufficient size they are placing long bamboos, bound together, on bullock-carts. I am a poor man, huzoor, but I think——"

"Yes, speak freely."

"I think they will drive carts and blindfolded bullocks into the ditch wherever there are gates leading to the palace. The carts and the bullocks will fall, but the bridge of bamboos will remain."

"Ha! A shrewd guess. Here are ten gold mohurs to make thy hair grow again."

Gopal Singh turned to explain more clearly the meaning of the man's message, when a fearful din broke out in the deserted courtyard. A series of resounding thumps mingled with the fall of masonry and the trumpeting of enraged elephants.

No man could explain what was toward, save that elephants were fighting for some unknown cause. At last the bellowing of one of the combatants, as his flesh and tough hide were rent by the tusks of his opponent, showed that this battle, at any rate, had been fought to a finish. The listeners could hear distinctly the cracking of his ribs when the victor knelt on him. Henceforth there was quietude, broken only by an occasional excited squeal from the conqueror.

At last a Dehra Dun Mahommedan gave what proved to be a true explanation of the incident. The battering-ram elephants, frenzied by the tumult of the attack—probably wounded by the bullets of the defenders and the spears of those who sought to stop their onward rush after the gate fell—had pitched their mahouts into eternity and roamed about the spacious court seeking forage. Chance had led them to select the same bundle of grass, and a Homeric conflict ensued for its possession. They were armed for the fray, and made a prolonged struggle before a six-foot tusk got home with fatal effect.

The nervous system of an elephant is an unknown quantity. When thoroughly aroused it is capable of excesses that

would make a self-respecting thousand-horse-power dynamo blush. Lal Kabutar, the victorious elephant, knocked down a couple of kiosks and a few stables to show that his powers were unimpaired, and then wandered forth into the bazaar, where his blood-stained armor and gory tusks created a fresh sensation. He offered no violence to the people, but strode majestically through the streets to seek the borders of the lake. Even in famine time crops grew there.

It happened that the fakir, Ram Nath, marked his passage, and recognized him as the state elephant of Narayan Das, for whose body the pile of sandalwood and aloe was steadily rising.

"Wao, wao!" he chanted, raising his sibilant voice in a dirge of prophetic inspiration. "Lal Kabutar is the Prince of Barapore! The elephant hath

avenged his master! He has broken the gates of the enemy and waded in the blood of the usurper. Praise to Lal Kabutar! Worship Lal Kabutar! He has the heart of a furious tiger and the strength of ten thousand men; aye, greater strength than all the men in Barapore."

The fantastic notion spread like wild-fire. The fearsome-looking brute stalked onward and vanished into the darkness, but the memory of his giant form, with the great steel boss on his forehead and the blood of more than one victim on his knees and flanks, abode with the people until the thousands of eye-witnesses believed, with the tens of thousands who saw not, that no ordinary elephant, but a great god of war had passed through Barapore that night to inspire them with fresh zeal in the struggle upon which they had entered.

TO BE CONTINUED.



A JOKE AND ITS OUTCOME

DURING the Civil War, several Northern soldiers were talking together one day just before the advance upon Corinth. A tall, ungainly, raw recruit stepped up to them with a bundle of soiled clothes in his hand. "Do you know where I can get this washing done?" he asked.

Two of the group were practical jokers. A bright thought flashed into their heads, and, as the sequel shows, unfortunately found expression. "Oh, yes, we know! Just go up there with your bundle"—pointing to the headquarters of General Grant, "you will see a short, stout man"—describing the general—"who does washing. Take your bundle to him."

The recruit thanked them, and walked off in the direction indicated. He gained entrance to headquarters, and stood in the general's presence.

"What can I do for you?" said General Grant.

"I was directed here by a couple of soldiers. They told me that you did washing, and I have a bundle here."

General Grant probably enjoyed the situation, but his imperturbable face did not relax. He simply asked the question, "Could you identify those men again?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well; you shall have the chance." Turning to an orderly, he directed him to call a guard, go with the recruit to where the jokers were standing ready to enjoy his discomfiture, and let him identify them. "Take the men to the guard-house, give them this man's bundle of clothing, and make them wash it thoroughly. See that the work is well done."

The general was obeyed to the letter.

The Hoodoo

By B. M. Bower

Author of "The Lure of the Dim Trails," "Chip of the Flying U," Etc.

The Happy Family of the Flying U ranch deliberately court disaster by investing their hard-earned money in a bit of portable property which possesses a grim pedigree, and which starts in immediately to justify its evil reputation

(A Complete Story)



THE Happy Family was enjoying what is called a "raze"—a species of more or less innocent outbreak indigent to the soil and atmosphere of the range-land. The reason for it does not particularly matter; it had to do with the monotony of ranch life in winter, and the running upon a band of gray wolves—with nothing but a steep cut-bank and some good rope-horses to aid in the capture of four slayers of cattle.

Such things stir the blood mightily—especially when it is youthful and red, and flows in the veins of the Happy Family—and demand a fitting climax. That is why the Happy Family caught up their snakiest horses, buckled on guns that were wont to repose harmlessly in the war-bags of the owners or to decorate the walls of the bunk-house, and rode breakneck into Dry Lake, whooping joyously to herald their coming.

Rusty Brown's place being the favorite rendezvous of celebrating cow-punchers, six panting horses, bearing upon their right flanks a Flying U, were presently ranged the length of Rusty Brown's hitching-pole; inside, six men, with the same brand writ deep on their hearts, if not upon their outward persons, were ranged the length of Rusty's bar.

Cal Emmett pushed his glass absently across the bar and stared intently at something upon the wall.

"Say, Rusty," he began, "if I didn't like a thing, I'd ditch it and be done. Yuh must have a mighty bum picture there, if it looks better hind-side out. Yuh got somebody black-listed, like in stories, and turned 'em face in?"

"Turn her around, Rusty, and let's have a look," added Jack Bates persuasively.

Rusty polished the bar with a none too clean towel, and grinned embarrassment. "That there ain't no picture," he explained hastily.

"What in thunder yuh got it hung up for?—and what is it?" demanded Cal, at no pains to hide his curiosity.

Rusty coughed and cast a malignant glance at the object; plainly, he hated to talk about the thing; it was also plain that he knew the Happy Family.

"That there," he began reluctantly, "is better faced in than out. That there's the hoodoo mirror."

"Turn her around," commanded Chip. "Let's have a look."

"Tain't lucky t' look into it, boys. No, that there's better faced in than out."

"Let's see it, Rusty," begged Weary. "I never saw a real hoodoo in m' life."

"Better not," Rusty warned anxiously. "That there's jest the way Jim

Engleby hung it up when he went on his last trip—an' he made faces at it an' told it how he didn't give a cuss fer no hoodoo. He hung it face in 'cause I told him to. I didn't want t' keep the thing, nohow. You know the rest—he went like the others did—only he was drowned. I don't want no truck with the thing—an' there she stays."

The Happy Family pricked up its ears and asked for particulars; not that they did not know the story—but it was refreshing to hear it told by a man who believed it firmly and uncomfortably.

"What about it, Rusty? Throw it out uh yuh," they chorused, and Weary added guilefully: "First I ever heard about it."

Him Rusty eyed with suspicion, and not without reason. The thing had been discussed at least once in every saloon and bunk-house in Choteau County. "Yuh must have a memory on yuh that jest lasts from one meal t' the next," he commented dryly.

But, once started, he was not averse to repeating the story, as is ever the case if the tale happens to be sufficiently gruesome.

"Well, if yuh want t' know, that there mirror's the same one Clem Ballard had in his saloon, down t' Trail Springs. Where *he* got it, I dunno. They do say it was stole. Yuh know he didn't have it long—Black Hank walked in one night and bawled Clem out b'fore the crowd, and yuh know how it ended.

"Clem cut down on him with his gun a half a second too late t' be any good t' him. Hank, he always did pull the trigger first in a gun-fight. I don't see, fer my part, how they made it self-defense—for he sure started the row, and everybody knowed he was a real wolf.

"Hank, he bought the mirror when they auctioned off Clem's defects—he didn't have no folks—and Hank had it just a month when his horse fell with him and broke his neck. And I guess there wasn't many mourners t' his funeral, neither.

"Then Bird Johnson got it, and hung it up over his bar, up at Big Jaw. He done a little better'n the rest, fer it

hung there three months without nothing happening t' Bird. Then he got into a 'lection fight with Mose Walsh—yuh remember—and Mose made such a war-talk over it that Bird went back t' the saloon after his gun. He stood in front uh that there glass, and showed the boys the way he'd do t' Mose Walsh, a-aiming at himself in the glass—and then he went out t' see where Mose was at.

"In less'n an hour they brung him back on a board"—Rusty leaned over the bar and let his voice slide into the hollow half-whisper with which men approach the supernatural—"and yuh can believe it er not, boys, but Bird had a hole in the middle of his forehead, in the identical spot he'd aimed at in the mirror, when he was showin' the boys how he'd git Mose!"

Happy Jack swallowed twice and his eyes were bulged and bright. True, he had heard the story before, but it chilled his blood, nevertheless. At the other tellings he had not had the mirror itself hanging within a yard of his nose.

"Uh course," Rusty added insincerely, straightening up and looking from one to another, "the mirror mightn't be t' blame—but it looks darn funny, all the same, that something happens t' every one that owns it. I don't own it—not legal—thank the Lord! And then there's Jim Engleby. *He* didn't b'lieve in no hoodoo, and he bought it after Bird got killed; wanted it fer a souvenir, he said. He didn't have no place t' put it, after he got it, and so he brung it t' me. He said it was his start toward housekeepin', and he was going t' git him a girl t' go with it.

"He says t' me—he was standing right where Happy Jack stands now"—Happy Jack moved farther along—"and he says: 'Here, Rusty, you keep this here for me. If the hoodoo gits me before I git a woman, I'll will it t' you.'

"'Well,' I says, 'I ain't none stuck on havin' it around, Jim, and that's no dream. But,' I says, 'I'll let it stay, if yuh hang it up yerself, and hang it hind-side out, I don't hanker t' admire my physiog. in it none,' I says.

"Yuh know what a josher Jim En-
gleby was. He roasted me some for be-
ing what he called supe'stitious, and he
says: 'Well, Rusty, if yuh really do
think they's a devil in that there look-
in'-glass, yuh jest watch while I cast
him out. But yuh want t' stand back,'
he says, 'fer they say devils that's cast
out are mighty liable t' go into swine,
if they's any handy by.'

"I ain't no swine—but yuh can bet
I stood back! And being they was only
me and Jim in here, I didn't feel no
call t' get on the fight—he was a great
josher, Jim was. So I got over there
on the pool-table—and I ain't ashamed
t' tell it—and Jim he set the mirror up
on the bar in front uh him, and turned
himself loose.

"If ever a hoodoo got bawled out
proper, that there one did then. He
stood up and called it names that ain't
in no dictionary—names that I wouldn't
a stood fer a holy minute. He made
faces that a cat would throw fits t' see,
and dared it something fierce. I tell
yuh right now I got plumb scared. So
I yelled at him t' let up.

"He turned around and looked at me
for a spell, and then he grinned and
hung her up, right where yuh see it
now. 'If *you* was a hoodoo, Rusty,'
he says, 'I guess I'd 'a' had yuh going
south, all right, all right. I guess Mr.
Mirror'll be good for a spell, anyway.'

"'Twasn't three days after that when
he dropped into an air-hole—and they's
no use me telling yuh stale news uh
that kind. But yuh take my word fer
it, boys—that there mirror's a darn
good thing t' let alone."

"By golly, yes!" agreed Slim, breath-
ing deeply.

Weary, leaning with an elbow on the
bar and his chin in his palm, turned
his head and looked at Slim attentively;
then his eyes traveled to Happy Jack
and dwelt upon him meditatively.

Never had they resembled each other
more nearly, although Happy Jack was
loose-jointed and lank, and Slim was
built somewhat upon the sugar-barrel
order. But each had, at that moment,
a complexion pasty white under the tan;
the jaw of each hung loose with hor-

ror, and as they gazed up at the rough,
wooden back of the mirror, their eyes
spoke one language—the language of
fear, which never needs an interpreter.

Cal Emmett, catching Weary's specu-
lative gaze, lowered his left eyelid and
raised an eyebrow.

Jack Bates, looking up at that in-
stant, caught the signal and its import,
and passed it on with his elbow at the
ribs of Chip Bennett.

In just about six seconds the four
were of one mind and one heart, and
understood one another much better
than does a cabinet meeting sometimes
after hours of discussion behind closed
doors.

"Mama mine!" sighed Weary, push-
ing his hat back off his forehead, which
was surprisingly white and smooth.
"I'd sure like to own that looking-
glass."

"By golly, I wouldn't!" blurted Slim,
his eyes clinging, fascinated, to the yel-
low wood.

"Say, wouldn't it look swell hung
up over the table in the bunk-house?"
queried Cal, in a voice reprehensibly in-
nocent, and with his baby-blue eyes
turned guilelessly upon Happy Jack's
perturbed countenance.

Happy Jack gave him a startled look
and averted his eyes quickly.

"It would be a peach to shave by,"
Cal added wistfully.

"What'll you take for it, Rusty?"
asked Chip, in a matter-of-fact tone, as
though it was a horse they were discuss-
ing.

Rusty studied the row of tanned, im-
passive faces, and hesitated, wishing
he might read the minds of the Happy
Family.

"I guess yuh ain't much eager t' buy
it," he said stiffly.

"Oh, I don't know," drawled Weary.
"If the price don't loom up, 'way above
my pile, I might——"

"Aw, come off!" interrupted Happy
Jack gruffly. "Yuh must be locoed,
t' talk like that."

"What's it worth?" repeated Chip,
in the tone that usually brought results.

"Twelve dollars—if yuh're hurting
bad t' know," snapped Rusty. He felt

out of touch with the situation; and to be out of touch, with Rusty, meant to be out of temper. Rusty loved a straight trail and a plain one.

"By golly, yuh dassent sell it!" cried Slim in a panicky voice. "Yuh said, just now, that yuh didn't own it."

Rusty eyed him coldly. "I didn't buy it," he said deliberately; "so, from the hoodoo standpoint, I guess I'm clear uh being the owner. But"—he paused and threw out his chest, which for him meant dignity—"I guess it's mine, all right, when it comes t' *selling*. If anybody here is anxious t' buy twelve dollars' worth uh devil, I ain't none bashful about handling the dough and delivering the goods."

"And yuh ain't none bashful about charging," Weary added sweetly. "I take it you're counting it two dollars' worth uh mirror, and ten dollars' worth uh hoodoo. Hoodoos come high this year."

"I'll bet yuh it's crooked as thunder," put in Jack Bates banteringly. "I'll bet yuh it's built like them maps that show the altitude uh the country in crimpily, red lines. I bet yuh can't look into the blame thing without your head whirls."

"Yeah—that's about the way she stacks up, chances is," corroborated Cal. "It looks to me like pretty coarse work—this turning it hind-side out because it's unlucky to look into it. It sure must be! This bunch uh woodies is hard t' work, old timer."

Rusty's face showed symptoms of apoplexy. "That there glass is straight as a die," he bellowed indignantly. "Yuh needn't take my word for it—turn it around, if yuh got the nerve. Yes, *buy* it—if yuh got the nerve—and die with your boots on!"

"Aw, come on up t' the store and let him be," proposed Happy Jack un- easily. "Straight or crooked, nobody cares a cuss."

But Weary went over the bar with a bound like a cat playing with autumn leaves. Like a cat in unfriendly mood, Slim drew back, ready to fight or run—with a strong preference for running, if one might judge by the look of him.

Weary reached up a long arm,

twitched the cord loose from its nail, and whirled triumphantly upon them. Rusty promptly turned his back, but the others gazed fixedly.

Five square feet of flawless glass caught the winter sunlight and flashed back at them mockingly. Happy Jack discovered, in one timorous glance, that he looked a badly frightened young man, and turned away with a snort of disgust at his own fear.

"No crinkles in *that* glass," conceded Jack Bates, and tilted his hat at a rakish angle before it complacently. Cal Emmett, at his elbow, retied his four-in-hand in an ostentatiously smirky manner, with Weary smiling sweetly over his shoulder.

"Mama! she's a peacherine," murmured Weary admiringly.

Chip carefully tore a narrow strip off a cigarette paper, and opened his sack of tobacco. "Make it ten and I'll buy it, Rusty," he said.

"Twelve dollars is the price," reiterated Rusty firmly. "Take it er leave it."

"Aw, come on—over t' the hotel," urged Happy Jack, edging toward the door.

But Chip laid a detaining hand upon his arm, and Happy Jack stopped where he was.

"Say!" broke in Weary, in the tone of one suddenly inspired. "Let's all throw in and make it a family matter. Two plunks apiece is what it'll take—and the hoodoo'll have his work cut out for him, if he takes to camping on the trail uh the whole bunch. We can sure keep him a-guessing some, with six of us to do business with. There's my share."

He laid two silver dollars, one upon the other, deliberately upon the bar. His face was more childlike and bland than one could find in the whole Chinese kingdom.

Cal searched silently his trousers pockets, then carefully piled two other dollars upon those of Weary. "Money's a-shouting," he observed cheerfully. "I guess that hoodoo hangs in the bunk-house to-night, all right. I bid for the first shave by it. Your move, Jack."

Jack Bates produced a five and pushed it across for Rusty to change into silver. Presently the little silver column rose a bit higher. It was like playing a game, and they huddled closer in the way men have when their interest has been caught by something new.

Chip had but one dollar coin, and borrowed from Jack. The column went up a trifle. After the clink of placing the last share, the room seemed very still.

The four conspirators waited expectantly for a minute, then turned inquiringly toward Happy Jack—a very unhappy Jack, by the way—and Slim. By a curious coincidence, their eyes became focused upon Slim—and there was that in their steady, unblinking gaze which made him squirm uncomfortably.

"By golly, yuh don't git me in on no such a deal!" he protested feebly—feebly, because he knew of old what it meant to have those four combined against him. He had experienced the combination many times, and it always had heralded great mental, or bodily, distress. "By golly, I ain't out buyin' up lookin'-glasses t'-day!"

"Sure you are!" Cal's hand came down heartily—and heavily—upon his shoulder. "We're out to do the square thing on this; we're willing t' own it share and share alike, with malice toward none."

"That's what!" chimed Weary, beaming upon Slim. "We couldn't think uh leaving *you* out uh this. It'll be yours as much as it is anybody's. Won't it, Chip?"

"I'd tell a man!" affirmed Chip, with characteristic brevity.

"Yuh needn't think it'll hurt my feelin's none t' be left out," Slim expostulated.

"If you're short uh the two dollars, I'll lend it to yuh," offered Jack Bates mildly.

Slim shook his head and drew away from Jack.

"If you're a *quitter*, Slim——" Chip stopped and examined his half-smoked cigarette critically.

Slim's face darkened two shades.

He had never been openly accused of cowardice; but then, he had never before been called upon to buy a mirror which he neither wanted nor needed, and which was known to bring death with unbecoming violence to its owners.

"By golly——" he choked, and stopped irresolutely; caught the curl of Chip's sarcastic lip, saw Cal's irrepressible left eyelid droop suggestively, and thrust a pudgy white hand deep into his pocket.

"Take your ole two dollars and be damn'!" he spluttered. Slim never could yield gracefully to misfortune.

The coins spun across the bar and dropped to the floor beyond. Rusty stooped and picked them up without a word. He was used to the eccentricities of cow-punchers; he had been one himself, when he was younger and had less bulk. He laid the money down, and Chip, with his slim, white fingers—the fingers of an artist—added them to the pile.

"Your move, Happy," he announced calmly; and they waited.

Happy Jack shifted his weight to the other foot, took his thumbs from inside his chap-belt, and slid his hands reluctantly into his pockets. Slim's ungracious surrender was not calculated to stimulate rebellion. Had he been invited to present his long neck to the hangman's noose, Happy Jack would have looked as cheerful.

Chip turned abruptly from him and took a sudden fit of coughing, and Weary dropped a nickel and was long finding it. When he did, his face was very red—probably from stooping.

Happy Jack, his lips twitching from nervous strain, slowly did as he was expected to do, and added his contribution to the rest. At least, he tried; but his fingers were ever clumsy—and they trembled noticeably. He knocked over the neatly stacked coins, and presently twelve silver dollars were rolling merrily over the bar, with Rusty scrambling for them avariciously.

"Bad luck," croaked Rusty, when he had gathered the last one greedily into his huge palm. "That there's sure a

bad sign, boys. If they ain't a funeral out t' the Flying U ranch inside a month I miss my guess."

"Well, if there is, Happy's it," Weary told them serenely. "He's the one that done it."

"That's what," chorused three solemn voices; and Happy Jack shivered and went out stumblingly into the deserted street.

After a minute, Slim followed him unobtrusively. When he had closed the door after him he heard much laughter within; he stopped a moment to listen, caught a sentence or two of derision directed at Happy and himself, and shook his fist at the closed door before he crossed to the hotel, where Happy Jack stood gazing sorrowfully at the horizon.

That night Happy Jack lost many games of poker, though it was his habit to win. And Slim, down in the exchange, had no better luck, though the game was not poker, but seven-up, and Slim was known usually to play with much science and skill.

As to the other four, they played two or three desultory games of billiards, discussed the hoodoo quietly among themselves, recalled, with much laughter, the terror of Slim and Happy Jack, and planned several little comedies to be played in the near future, with the mirror as the principal stage furniture. When that subject began to pall, they bethought them of the new constable, and resolved to stir him up a bit.

Dry Lake, in a spasm of virtue, had decided that it needed a constable. It observed that it was a disgrace for a town of three saloons, a hotel, and a store—to say nothing of the blacksmith shop and the schoolhouse—to be without such an official; hence, Joe O'Brien was honored beyond his deserts, and given the office.

After a month of sitting in warm corners while his salary accumulated, he had done little to show cause for his official existence. To be plain, he had run an indoffensive hobo out of town, and had threatened Old Doc with the lockup—a mere figure of speech, since

in reality it was a dilapidated ice-house—if he did not cease making incoherent speeches in the middle of the street.

The Happy Family looked in upon him where he sprawled in the easiest chair he could find, smiled understandingly at one another, and trooped off to the store after a supply of ammunition. Then they hauled Happy Jack and Slim from their melancholy pastime, pressed upon them many rounds of cartridges, mounted their horses, and began conscientiously and thoroughly to shoot up the town.

Dry Lake was astonished beyond measure at the outbreak, for the Flying U boys were, generally speaking, mild-mannered and peaceful. The constable was grieved. He knew the Happy Family, and he foresaw many complications and difficulties in attempting to abate them. He left his warm corner and retired to his room and went to bed, though the night was exceeding young.

The Happy Family rode and yelled and fired many shots, but the constable absolutely refused to hear the commotion. They halted in front of Rusty's place to consider their next move. The Happy Family wanted results.

"Aw, boys, let up!" Rusty advised them from the doorway. "You'll be breakin' a window, or hitting somebody."

"Looks like we'd have to," mourned Cal, while he reloaded. "What's become uh that toy constable uh yours, anyhow? Don't he care anything about the peace and dignity uh this burg?"

"He's gone to bed," drawled a sarcastic voice. "Yuh needn't bore the sky full uh holes—he's sure sleeping sound and sweet t'-night."

"Where's his room at?" Weary wanted to know; and the voice told him. It chanced to be somewhat detached from other sleeping-rooms, and it had a door opening on the street; also a window. The Happy Family rode across and surveyed silently the closed door and the darkened window.

"I'm a great believer in fresh air," Chip announced soberly. "That constable oughtn't to sleep without any ventilation in his room—it isn't

healthy." Chip, aiming high, let the cold night air through an upper pane.

"That's the stuff!" approved Cal, and added his mite.

"He sure sleeps sound," commented Jack Bates, as another pane tinkled.

When each of them had contributed toward what Cal termed the constable's "fresh-air fund," they gave a parting whoop, which spoke well for the condition of their lungs, and started home. Opposite the blacksmith shop, Weary stopped his horse with a jerk.

"Oh, mama!" he cried. "We've plumb forgot the hoodoo! You ride on slow, boys, and I'll go back and get it."

"Better let it stay where it's at," croaked Happy Jack, but Weary was already out of hearing.

They walked their horses to the mouth of the lane; then Weary overtook them, and in his arms he bore their newly acquired property.

"She's going to be a beast to carry," he announced. "We'll have to take turn about. And, say, their little old constable has come alive, and is hot-foot after us. Hear him? I looked back, on top uh that little knoll, and, mama! he was sure a-burning the earth! His quirt was swinging like a bell-clapper. Oh, he's sure bad medicine!"

"Somebody'll have t' haze him back t' the bunch," said Jack Bates, as they waited and listened. "Dry Lake ought t' keep him on a picket-rope. They'll lose him, some uh these days, if they let him run loose like this."

An ominously silent group, silhouetted sharply against the stars, they waited his coming. He rode furiously up to them, brandishing his gun menacingly.

"I arrest the hull bunch fer disturb-in' the peace!" he yelled, much louder than was at all necessary. The Happy Family was not deaf. Somebody giggled, and if they could have seen distinctly, the Happy Family could not have failed to notice how the blood surged to the constable's face.

"Yuh got t' come right along back t' town, boys. So move!" His tone was officially stern and uncompromising.

"Sure, we will!" cried Jack Bates. And they did.

Their onslaught was unexpected, and the constable came near being unseated. Before he could turn, a gloved hand clutched his bridle and swung his horse around.

"Come right along, sonny," they called, and presently he found himself fleeing before them much faster than he had gone after them. With yells that must have carried for miles, they tore after him as he scurried. At the blacksmith shop they pulled up.

"Pleasant dreams, yer honor!" they chorused, their voices thrilling with mischief and youth and good health. The constable never looked back.

The Happy Family rode blithely homeward, singing until they were well out of the lane. Ranchers who were awakened by the noise turned in their beds and said unflattering things about "drunken cow-punchers"—but the Happy Family rode with clear heads, even though their lungs bore evidence against their sobriety.

On the last, long up-grade, Weary shifted the mirror—which was growing extremely heavy, and had been carried by each of the four in turn—and turned to Happy Jack.

"Do yuh really think this thing's a hoodoo, Happy?" he asked curiously.

"Yuh bet your life I do," Happy Jack said gruffly. "So'll you, before you're through with it. Yuh mark my words——"

"Oh, I don't want to mark your words, Happy. I want yuh to carry the cussed thing a ways. We've all had our turn but you and Slim."

"Give it t' Slim, then," advised Happy selfishly.

"Slim's arms is too short; he couldn't hang onto it. Yuh got t' take it, Happy."

"Aw, come off!" jeered Happy, backing a little.

"Yuh got t' take it," reiterated Weary firmly, and faced him in the trail.

"I'd smile t' see yuh *make* me," defied Happy, wheeling, prepared for flight.

"You've got a long, sweet smile a-coming," threatened Weary; and took after him.

They raced out of sight over a ridge, and the Happy Family stopped and waited. Chip made him a cigarette disgustedly.

"I hope we've all been fools enough to-day to last us ten years," he said. "We've acted like a bunch of locoed sheep-herders."

"Yeah—we sure have," assented Cal, getting out his papers and tobacco.

"By golly, that there lookin'-glass started it—and that lookin'-glass'll wind up our razee for us, too! You'll see."

"Aw, shut up! Let Happy do the croaking," snapped Jack Bates crossly. "Nobody takes any stock in that yarn, anyhow."

"By golly, I ain't so sure about that! I'll bet——"

Happy Jack galloped up to them, and something in his very silence made them hold their breath.

"Where's Weary?" Chip demanded sharply.

Happy Jack rode closer. Even in the starlight they could see the whiteness of his face. He wetted his lips before he spoke, the while they crowded around him.

"Weary—he—his horse fell with him—he—for God's sake, boys! It's my fault!"

An instant they sat stunned, then Chip leaned and gripped his collar fiercely. "You darn' idiot, where is he? Why didn't you stay? You could have called us—we'd have heard."

"Lead out," commanded Cal, from the other side.

Happy Jack turned and led them to the place. Weary's horse stood with hanging bridle-reins and head drooping, after the manner of range horses left without a mount. Ten feet away, a dark shape huddled among the dead, frozen grasses.

Chip and Cal were first to reach him—for they held him very dear. Chip it was who raised him in his arms.

"Got any whisky? He isn't——" He did not speak the word which filled their minds sickeningly.

Somebody produced a small flask, and Chip got a little of it down Weary's throat, and much more on his clothes. Weary gasped, and the Unhappy Family took a long breath.

"I'll bet a dollar I smashed that glass into a million pieces," murmured Weary faintly.

"Lucky if yuh didn't smash yourself," Cal retorted brusquely. "How do yuh stack up?"

"I lost my hat," grinned Weary, trying to hold his voice natural.

"Aw, quit your fooling!" admonished Chip. He noticed that Weary was lying rather heavily upon his arm, and that he made no effort to rise.

"Well, on the dead, boys, I guess my ankle's on the bum. *Don't* go poking it around! Can't yuh take my word for it? It's broke or—— I hope that darn' glass is busted."

"It ought to be, if it ain't," cried Jack Bates savagely. "Kinda looks like there *was* something in that yarn. Where's it at, anyhow?"

Cal Emmett discovered it a few feet away, and raised it gingerly. It shone dimly in the half-darkness, and mocked them with star-images, and the moon just peeping curiously from behind a white cloud-veil. They stared at it nervously.

"Never feazed it!" Slim muttered superstitiously. "By golly——"

Happy Jack came out of the shadows and stood over Cal and the mirror.

"It's a hoodoo," he asserted dully. "I knowed it all along. I'll kill somebody yet, if"—he looked around at the others, then down at Weary, still gamely trying to make light of his hurt—"if somebody don't fix it for fair," he finished doggedly.

He waited, expecting them to jeer. But no one spoke or moved. Happy Jack bent and looked into the glass long and intently.

"There ain't a crack in it," he said, and waited again.

Still there was silence, except for the yelping of a coyote far down the coulee. Weary moved his head uneasily, and Chip placed the flask to his lips.

Happy Jack breathed deeply, reached

down his long arms, and grasped the mirror firmly in both hands. As though it were a living, hated thing, he raised it relentlessly high above his head; poised it there a moment, face down; took three long strides to where a rock thrust its gray nose up from the grass, glanced malevolently up into the duskily mocking shine above him, then brought it down, with all the strength of his powerful young arms, upon the rock.

There was a tinkling crash, a shower of gleaming needles and larger fragments, and the hoodoo mirror lay, a shattered, useless thing upon the brown, sleeping prairie. The Happy Family stood like a group of bronze figures, and gazed long upon the place where it lay.

"Good shot, Happy!" Cal's voice was very gentle, and the hand which he laid upon Happy Jack's shoulder was not quite steady. Happy Jack could feel the tremble of it through his coat.

"Happy, you're sure all right," commended Jack Bates.

"I'd tell a man he is!" said Chip with decision.

"Aw, come off—I—it wasn't anything," stammered Happy Jack, quite as if he were ashamed of himself.

"Mama! are you gazabos going to bed down out here on a pinnacle?" complained Weary. "I'd like to get somewhere while I'm nerved up to it. It—won't be any picnic."

"I guess we've had a touch uh the weed," said Jack Bates petulantly. "Such a plumb locoed bunch uh punchers I never met up with before. Bring that cayuse uh Weary's here, Slim. Are yuh asleep?"

"Weary's horse won't lead," cut in Chip. "Better put him on Silver, I guess. Lead him up here, somebody."

The next half-hour was not a pleasant one—nor was the journey home. In putting Weary into the saddle, somebody touched his foot, and he fainted outright—which was almost more than the Unhappy Family could endure. There was not one but would have given much to take his place and bear the pain for him; and Weary knew it.

For that he spent a good deal of energy in trying to laugh at his plight, as though it were a joke. But they saw through his flimsy pretensions and refused to be cheered thereby.

When they were finally ready to start, Weary stopped them imperatively.

"Look around, somebody, and see if there ain't a piece uh that hoodoo left, big enough to pay for packing it home. I had two dollars invested in that. I claim the biggest piece—and I'll shave by it, just to be ornery."

"Aw, come on!" protested Happy Jack uneasily.

"Yuh wasn't scared awhile back," Weary reminded him. "Go on and look. I'll stop right here till morning, if yuh don't."

Chip laughed a little, in spite of himself. "A fellow in your shape isn't in any position to make threats," he retorted. "I guess we'll come pretty near doing as we like about it."

For all that, they waited. Cal found a fragment the size of a dinner-plate, and Weary consented to go home.

Early the next morning, Chip and Cal drove away to Fort Benton, with Weary lying upon his own bed in the back of the wagon. His ankle, they had discovered, was dislocated, and needed the services of a doctor—with a few weeks of hospital treatment to insure against permanent lameness.

Slim, Happy Jack, and Jack Bates saddled their horses and escorted them for a mile or two.

Weary was still trying to make light of the pain, and turned the fire of his raillery upon Happy Jack.

"I never before," he bantered, "saw Happy waste anything that was worth money. I like to 'a' died last night when I seen him smash that glass that he'd paid two dollars uh hard earned coin to help buy."

"He done it deliberate, too," added Jack Bates. "Happy'll sure land in the poorhouse, if he keeps that lick up. And Slim stood and watched him do it, and never batted an eye."

"Yeah—I never though uh that before," said Cal. "The only two Thrifty Thomases in the outfit, too."

"What did yuh do it for, Happy?" asked Weary. "Didn't yuh know yuh was throwing good money away?"

Happy Jack grew red, then looked across at Slim and grinned.

"Me and Slim didn't own no share in that hoodoo," he explained, with a gloating note of gratified revenge in his voice. "Me and Slim both of us sold out our int'rest—I put my share

up on a game uh poker, and Dutch Carl won it from me. Slim, he lost his in a game uh seven-up—but I don't know who to. You fellows ain't so many as yuh think."

"Oh!" Cal and Jack Bates looked queerly at each other and grinned sheepishly.

Weary drew a blanket up over his face, and said never a word.



EVERY-DAY MISQUOTATIONS

EVEN the least scholarly of us nowadays are prone to quotation, though we might not indulge ourselves quite so often if we believed a little more thoroughly that a little learning—usually misquoted "knowledge"—is a dangerous thing; and that it is not safe to quote a phrase unless you are familiar with the work in which it occurs.

Take, for instance, "the even tenor of their way." Gray never penned such a phrase in his "Elegy." What he wrote was "the noiseless tenor of their way." Nathaniel Lee also suffers in "When Greek meets Greek, then comes the tug of war." What he wrote was "When Greeks joined Greeks, then was the tug of war."

Again, how often is "but the tongue can no man tame, it is an unruly evil" (James iii., 8), rendered "the tongue is an unruly member"!

"Charity shall cover over the multitude of sins" (1 Peter iv., 8) is usually distorted into "charity covereth a multitude of sins."

We were wont to talk about "speeding the parting guest," too; whereas Pope, in *Satire II.*, wrote "speed the going guest."

The champion case of nonsense put forward as sense, however, is probably the crime which is continually being committed against Butler's "Hudibras," Part III.: "A man convinced against his will will hold the same opinion still." Of course, what Butler wrote was, "He that complies against his will is of his own opinion still"—a slight difference in sense as well as words, surely.

The passage on mercy from Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice" (Act IV., Sc. 1) is usually given as "falleth as the gentle dew," whereas the words writ by the bard are "droppeth as the gentle rain."

Again, take "Romeo and Juliet" (Act II., Sc. 2): "that I shall say good night, till it be morrow," is in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred misquoted as: "that I could say good night until to-morrow."

We are also fond of saying "the man that hath no music in his soul"; but the correct phrase (*Ibid.*, Act V., Sc. 1) is "the man that hath no music in himself."

Even Milton does not escape. His "fresh woods and pastures new" ("Lycidas") is usually misquoted, "fresh fields and pastures new."

When in nautical mood we are apt to wax eloquent about "a wet sheet and a flowing sail," whereas Cunningham wrote: "a wet sheet and a flowing sea."

These are but a few of the more striking instances of misquotation; but there are countless others being daily perpetrated.

A Plunge Into the Unknown

By Richard Marsh

Author of "The Ape and the Diamond," "The Whistle of Fate," Etc.

CHAPTER XV.

ELSIE'S BROTHER.



IN the dining-room at Dullington Vicarage, the vicar's wife stood talking to her son. Suddenly she laid her hand upon his arm.

"Hush! Some one's coming!"

The two stood listening. In the woman's strained attitude, on her frightened face, was an agony of attention. The expression on the man's features suggested something which was worse than fear—the fury of a desperate man. There was a sound of footsteps crunching the gravel path.

"Who is it?" she whispered.

His tone, as he replied, was grim.

"I know who it isn't; it isn't—them."

"How do you know? How can you tell?"

"My dear mother, if you were in my position—which the saints forbid you ever may be—you'd know, even though you were unable to say exactly how."

"Whoever it is, is coming this way; what shall you do?"

"Just step behind this curtain; don't keep them, whoever it is. In this light nothing will be seen."

He moved behind the heavy stuff-curtain, which was draped at one side of the window.

Without, the last rays of the departed sun still lighted the sky; within the room all was shadow.

Scarcely had he disappeared when a voice came through the open window:

"Excuse me, but is there any one inside there? I appear to have taken the wrong path, and to have come round to the side of the house instead of to the front."

Silence within. The mother seemed to hear her own heart beating. Her limbs trembled; she closed her eyes, as if to shut out something which she feared to see. A scarcely audible murmur came from behind the curtain.

"Answer!"

And she answered:

"Who is it?"

"I beg your pardon, but is this Dullington Vicarage?"

"It is. Who are you? What do you want? The entrance to the house is on the other side."

"So I now perceive. But the dim light is bewildering, and the garden is such a large one that I appear to have lost my way. Is Mr. Thornton, or Mrs. Thornton, at home?"

"I am Mrs. Thornton."

"And I am George Otway."

There appeared in the frame of the open window, outlined against the faintly glowing sky, a big man, who carried his hat in his hand.

"George Otway? I seem to know the name."

"I have called to see you with reference to your daughter—Miss Elsie Thornton."

"Surely—you are the man who ran away with her!"

"Who ran away with her?"

The surprise the speaker felt was mirrored in his voice. The woman's tremulous tones betrayed her agitation.

"I know all about you, sir; you do

not come and find me ignorant. I know that a man who called himself George Otway induced my child to leave the *Queen of the Seas* in a boat alone with him at dead of night. Where is my daughter now? Have you brought her home to her mother, sir?"

"You are under some singular misapprehension."

"I think not. I have the whole wretched story in Mrs. D'Agostino's own hand—the lady with whom my child went as her companion. She has written and told me all."

"In my turn, Mrs. Thornton, I think not. It is true that Miss Thornton and I were alone together in a little boat on the open sea, but the position was chosen by neither of us."

"I do not understand. I am afraid I must be a very wicked woman, because God seems to have marked me out for so many afflictions. I only know that you have taken my daughter from me, sir, and that I want her back again. Where is she?"

"I saw her last night in a house at Liverpool, and it is because I saw her there that I am here to-night."

"You saw her in a house at Liverpool? What do you mean?"

"At the risk of occasioning you more pain, Mrs. Thornton, I feel that I had better be candid. I fear that Miss Thornton has suffered either from a shock or from some form of illness, which, for the moment, has robbed her of the complete use of her faculties."

"Robbed her of the complete use of her faculties? What do you mean?"

He told her, as briefly and as plainly as he could, exactly what he did mean, narrating the story of his adventure in the house at Sefton Park with as much clearness as he could. She interrupted him from time to time with eager, anxious questions.

When he had finished, her whole heart seemed in her words:

"Is what you have told me true?"

"Madam, it is the absolute truth."

She examined his face as thoroughly as the dim light permitted, seeming to find on it something which lent her a measure of reassurance.

"Can I believe you? Oh, if I were only sure that I could trust and believe you."

The answer came from an unexpected quarter.

"I think, mother, that you may at least believe this gentleman."

There stepped out from behind the curtain a figure which was enveloped in what looked like a long, black waterproof. George Otway regarded him with something which was very much like angry surprise.

"I did not know that we were honored by the presence of a listener."

The newcomer was not slow to detect the touch of irritation with which the other spoke. In his reply there was a little touch of hauteur, as if he felt that his words were sufficient justification for anything which he might do.

"I am Frank Thornton—Elsie Thornton's brother."

"I am glad to have the honor of meeting you, Mr. Thornton; still, may I ask why you have delayed making yourself known to me in so unusual a fashion?"

Frank Thornton hesitated for a moment, as if doubtful what form his answer should take. His mother went closer to him, touching him furtively with the tips of her fingers on the arm. In both her voice and her manner there seemed to be a spasm of fear.

"Frank, I—I will take this—this gentleman into the other room."

"Don't distress yourself with shadows, mother. There are realities enough without them. I fancy Mr. Otway may not be altogether the sort of person you have supposed."

His manner, though quiet and self-possessed enough, seemed to do little toward calming his mother's agitation. Her voice was, if anything, more tremulous than before.

"No risks, my son, no risks! For God's sake, no risks!"

"Hush, mother. You conjure up fears which may exist only in your own imagination. Believe me, I will take no more risks than I can help, where there is nothing else but risks. It is essential that you and I should know if

what this gentleman says is true; if we may trust him. It seems to me that there is no better way of making sure of that than this."

"Trank!"

Her voice rose in a wail of supplication, as if she besought him not to do the thing which he was about to do, but she was too late.

Already, before her cry was uttered, he had put his hand up to his throat, and, loosing the voluminous garment which covered him, let it drop to the floor; even in the dim light it was made plain that he was attired in the ill-cut, badly fitting, hideous garb which felons wear.

He had not the knickerbockers and gray stockings of the convict but the brick-dust-colored trousers, liberally ornamented with broad arrows, which mark the convicted criminal sentenced, not to "penal servitude," but to "hard labor."

The revelation was followed by silence for, perhaps, ten seconds, during which George Otway had time to digest the fact thus suddenly disclosed to him and to grasp at least something of what it must mean.

Thornton was the first to break the stillness. In his voice there was no hint of shame, but rather a suggestion of pride and rage and scorn. It needed but an elementary judge of character to perceive that his ostentatious air of icy coldness only served as a cover to the flaming, fiery furnace which raged within.

"You see? I am a felon escaped from jail—and Elsie Thornton's brother. You make the acquaintance of her family under somewhat singular circumstances. Now you understand why, when I became conscious that some one was approaching, I considered it advisable to conceal myself behind the curtain, Mr. Otway."

George Otway was still. Although used to being taken unawares, the surprise, in this case, was so complete, so sudden, and of a nature so entirely unexpected, that even his nimble wits refused to take in, on the instant, all the potentialities of the position.

He had associated Elsie Thornton with nothing but innocence, purity, sweetness, truth, honor. The idea of having to connect her with a brother who was a convicted felon required a change in his point of view which even he could not bring about without an effort.

Besides, there was something in this brother's bearing which was so different to what one expects to find in a hardened criminal that he wanted, before committing himself in any way, to have some faint notion of what kind of man this really was with whom he had to deal.

So it happened that the two men tried, in silence, to make out as much as they could of each other in the rapidly darkening room, while the mother held her peace. It was the man in the uniform of shame who spoke first.

"You appear to have been falsely accused, Mr. Otway. I also have suffered from the same thing. The charge against you was as serious as could easily be made against a man, but you have still an opportunity to disprove your guilt. For me that opportunity is still to seek; it is because I am seeking for it that you see me here. I have heard the story which you have told my mother, and am disposed to think, judging by the ear alone, that it has the ring of truth. I should like to have a chance of calling in my eyes as judges. Mother, do you think that we could have a lamp, so that Mr. Otway and I could see each other better?"

In the woman's voice was the old anxiety.

"Are you sure, my boy, that it is wise?"

"I am sure, mother, that it would be unwise to run a risk of Mr. Otway and myself remaining acquaintances only of the darkness."

"Let me close the window and draw the curtains, and then you shall have a lamp."

When the lighted lamp was placed upon the table, George Otway saw what manner of persons these were with whom he had been brought into such curious contact.

Mrs. Thornton was a little woman, whose chestnut hair—Elsie's hair—was lighted here and there with gray. Her features were small and dainty; she still was pretty, but pinched and worn. Hers was the face of a woman who had known much trouble.

Her son was as large as she was little. Even the hideous costume which he wore could not conceal the fact that he was shaped after a good model, and that he bore himself as a man should do. The close-cropped black hair brought his fine head into clearer outline.

Otway was surprised to learn how young he was. He had the clean, healthy look of a well-living youth of three or four-and-twenty. It was a handsome face, and a strong one, full of character.

There was resolution in the square jaw; there was promise in the fine-cut, aquiline nose; there was an attractive quality in the eyes, wide apart, set well back in the head, large and open-lidded. One doubted if, in color, they were violet or dark blue.

But they were fearless, unshrinking eyes, which looked at the world steadily and sanely. In them, at the moment, was a stern show of pride, which amounted almost to defiance; yet one felt that they could be lighted with a radiance of laughter in front of which the sourest temper would have to sweeten.

Having looked this young man carefully up and down, as a connoisseur might inspect a curio on which he has to deliver judgment, George Otway arrived at a verdict on at least two points: the one, that, so far as looks were concerned, this was just the person he would have chosen to be Elsie's brother; the other, that any one who seemed less like the sort of material out of which a jailbird is fashioned he had never yet encountered.

If this man had been condemned to prison by a level-headed jury, then it was for doing something for which no person would have need to be ashamed; or, in giving him to the world as an example of her handicraft, Nature had

either used the wrong mold by mistake or—told a lie; for even Dame Nature has no right to scrawl honor and honesty large all over a man if those are qualities which he does not possess.

Not the least odd part of the business was that each man seemed to arrive at something like the same decision as regards the other. Presently the young man turned to Mrs. Thornton, saying:

"Mother, I think you may believe Mr. Otway." Then to that gentleman himself he said: "So, in Liverpool, last night, you saw my sister in a position which suggests that she is in want of help."

"Indeed I am almost afraid to think how much she may be in want of help."

"Unconsciously, Mr. Otway, you are making my position more than I can bear." Involuntarily the young man closed his eyes, as if seeking to shut out something of horror which it was beyond his strength to look at. "As I have told you, I am here because I seek for a chance to show that I am not the creature which this uniform makes me appear. That I can do it I know, if I can only have a little time and a little opportunity. But, for me, these are the two hardest things to get in all the world: time and opportunity; as you may guess, and, if Elsie's in the plight you speak of, my first duty is to her. How can I let the precious moments slip by without rendering her the aid of which she is standing in such pressing need? Yet, if I turn to help her, before I can be of any real assistance the small modicum of time and opportunity which I have risked so much to gain will have slipped away, and they will have me back again in the place from which I've lately come. That will mean an end of all hope both for Elsie and for me. So, Mr. Otway, you perceive the dilemma in which I am."

"Before we proceed any farther, you and I, I should like to put to you a question, Mr. Thornton, which I hope you will not resent. If you are the kind of man I take you for, you won't. You have lately been an inmate of one of his majesty's jails?"

"I have; so lately as this morning."

"Are you innocent of the offense for which you have been sent there?"

"I am; as innocent as you are."

"I knew it. But the keystone of my character is the business instinct, and I like to have everything, in matters of the least importance, set down clearly in black and white. Will you give me your hand, Mr. Thornton? I shall be very glad to give you mine."

CHAPTER XVI.

ESCAPED!

As they exchanged grips the young man laughed, on which Otway laughed, too, saying, as he did so:

"Thornton, you're the sort of man I've been looking for, for some time—the right sort—the sort who, when a villainous fate and a scurvy fortune give him least cause for laughter, laughs still, and with a gay heart. That's the sort of man who wins the battle of life in the end. Apart from the fact that, for her sake, it would give me pleasure to meet even a thirteenth cousin of your sister's, I'm glad to meet you on your own account. Now, tell me—with all due apologies to Mrs. Thornton—how the deuce comes it that you find yourself in this galley?"

"Do you mean just where I am?" Otway nodded. "Well, I've run away."

"I take it that you've run away. I'm not wanting you to tell me that, being capable of guessing that you're not in that suit of clothes just for the benefit of your health. But I've always rather taken it for granted that his majesty's jails are not easy places to get away from; at any rate, to any great extent."

Frank Thornton laughed again, shortly, dryly.

"You're right; they're not. It's like this with me. Not a fortnight ago I was found guilty of embezzlement—robbing my employers. Although the offense was a first one"—this with another grin—"the case was a bad one, so that the judge, in his great wisdom, thought it well to mark his sense of the enormity of my guilt by sentencing me to two years' hard labor."

"Did he? And where's the man who did it?"

"I know. It is to get within reach of him that I've run away. When I do, I don't think it will be long before I succeed in persuading him that it might be advisable for him to tell the truth."

This was spoken with a grimness which was eloquent. Otway smiled.

"I shouldn't be surprised if you turn out to be right, if you find him in a proper mood and a convenient place."

"That's it; it's a question of time and opportunity, both of which things are likely to be most to seek."

"I suppose they're after you?"

"I suppose they are—hot foot, especially after the fashion in which I gave them the slip."

"How did you do it?"

"In a tunnel."

"In a tunnel? I wasn't aware that prisons had tunnels."

"They haven't. I wasn't in the prison at the time. I'll explain. After my sentence they sent me to Wandsworth jail. There a warder came to me and informed me that I was to be transported to another prison. He didn't condescend to inform me why or where; and it was only when I found myself at Clapham Junction in company with a dozen other gentlemen in the same position that it dawned on me that we were bound for Lewes. Now, I live here; Lewes jail is over there"—he pointed with his hand—"not so very many miles off. On the way to it we should have to pass through country almost every yard of which I knew. I should not be very far from friends—the kind of friends who never fail."

He put his arm about his mother's waist and drew her closer to his side. It was odd to see how diminutive she was in comparison with him.

"There rose in my mind the glimmer of a thought that if I could escape from my custodians, if only for a little while, I might get within reach of a harbor of refuge from which it might be difficult for them to win me back. Before they could do it I might have brought the man, who had chosen to let me occupy the place which he

ought to have filled, to a state of mind in which he would make it clear to all the world that they had no right to me at all. So that freedom for an hour or two might mean my restoration to that place among honorable men out of which I had been juggled."

He stopped for a second to kiss his mother and to smooth her hair with his hand.

"As I said, it was but a glimmer of a thought. I never dreamed that a chance of escape would offer. I had imagined that convicted prisoners, passing from jail to jail, would be kept in such rigid safe-keeping that a chance of slipping away could never, by any possibility, occur. And to do my custodians justice, they did their duty well, never relaxing watch or ward. If it were not owing to two little accidents which would not be likely to recur, I suppose, once in a million times, they would have delivered me, in due course, at the address to which I was consigned.

"The first accident occurred nearly at the start. It consisted in the fact that the guard of the train by which we journeyed happened to be a man whom I have known for many years. He used to live in our village, and began his railway career at the local station. It chanced that my father was able to render him one or two services, and he is a man with a memory.

"As we were being marched to the compartment which had been reserved for our accommodation I saw him standing by the open door. He saw me, too. Although he made not the slightest sign of recognition, I knew, all at once, that I had for friend a man in authority, whose heart was not only in the proper place, but whose head, also, was screwed on in the right way. When we were in he was supposed to shut the door and lock it. But I knew—although still he gave no sign—that the locking had been but a feint.

"That guard was accident number one. It was when the train was stopping at Croydon that I came on accident number two. I discovered that the handcuff by means of which I was,

as it were, riveted to another prisoner—a drink-sodden Billingsgate porter, who was doing six months for kicking his wife—had something the matter with its constitution, which had prevented it from properly snapping, so that I had but to give my wrist a sharp twist to be freed from it.

"My companion recognized the position at the same instant I did, but, with admirable sagacity, he betrayed no hint of it. Possibly the same idea was taking root in his mind which had already germinated in mine.

"With me it was beginning to take tangible shape, and that shape was—Balcombe Tunnel. The words—Balcombe Tunnel—were commencing to occupy my brain to the exclusion of all else. Balcombe Tunnel is about the nearest point to Dullington. I knew every foot of the country which lies between. My companion and I were facing the engine. A warder was on my left. Beyond him was the door, which, although it was supposed to be locked, had the window up.

"That closed window not only made the atmosphere in our compartment bear a family resemblance to that of the Black Hole of Calcutta—you will understand that we were eight prisoners and four warders: the other four prisoners were with three warders in the compartment behind us—but it promised to put the little excursion I was contemplating beyond my capacity. I should not only have to pass the warder at my side, but get that window down and turn the handle of that door.

"It seemed to me that it would be impossible for me to perform those three operations before the official eye; and so, I believe, it would have proved if it had not been for a trifle for which I have a slight suspicion that I was indebted to accident number one—in other words, to my friend the guard of the train.

"How he managed it I can only surmise; but if he was not responsible I can only say that, by a very extraordinary coincidence indeed the light went out as we entered Balcombe Tunnel. Suddenly, and without the slightest

warning in the way of a premonitory flicker, just as we got well out of the daylight, the gas overhead disappeared, and we were plunged into utter darkness. There ensued, in the pitch blackness, a hubbub and confusion which I will not attempt to describe. My companions were the sort of people to make the most—from their point of view—of so unexpected an occurrence. Shielded from the warders' vision, it did not matter what they did; and they did it.

"Quite what happened I cannot tell you. I can only say that within half-a-dozen seconds after the light had vanished I had wrenched myself free of the handcuff which attached me to my companion on the right, and that the carriage was full of noisy and scuffling men. I held my peace, keeping as still as the others would allow me to do, waiting and watching for my chance. The warder at my side kept trying to light a match. Every time a flame appeared some one put it out again.

"The train was traveling pretty fast. On our side was the tunnel wall. I knew that between us and it was a space which could be measured by inches rather than feet; that here and there were bays in the brickwork into which men working on the line could draw back to permit trains to pass them.

"If I opened that carriage door the chances were that it would spring back from the wall. And, in any case, the prospect of having to leap out on to that narrow strip of space in the darkness, with the train going at that rate, was not a pleasant one to contemplate. Yet it would have to be that or nothing.

"I did think of making a dash for the alarm, stopping the train, and then springing out as it was slackening speed. But then, if I could alight from a motionless, or almost motionless, train, others could, and probably would, do so, also. I should become the object of a hot pursuit.

"On the other hand, the persons who would jump in the darkness from a flying train were few and far between. I doubted if even the warders would try it.

"So I resolved that I would wait un-

til the train, as I judged, was at least half-way through the tunnel, and then, while it was still moving at full speed, I'd try my luck.

"It is surprising that I managed to get out of the carriage at all, there was so much rough-and-tumble horse-play. More than once I was almost driven out of my seat. At last I was quite. Some one, giving me a tremendous shove, pushed me forward so that I had to take refuge on the floor of the carriage on my hands and knees.

"As I put out my arm to save myself it came in contact with the warder's arm, who I immediately understood was holding the strap of the window to prevent its being lowered.

"Somehow that decided me. I dragged his wrist away, got the window down and the door open in a shorter space of time than, I should think, it was ever done before.

"Almost before I knew it myself I was standing on the foot-board. Then some one made a grab at me; I felt his hand grazing my tightly buttoned jacket.

"I realized that, while there was more room between the side of the tunnel and us than I had supposed, I was still higher above the ground than I had bargained for. An attempt to reach it with one swinging foot, and so alight as, for instance, one does from a moving car, resulted in failure. My foot touched nothing but the empty air. Evidently I should just have to leap into the darkness and hope for the best.

"I leaped, and as I did so some one fired a revolver. Whether a warder had aimed at me, or whether he merely desired to sound an alarm, I cannot say. It seemed that I banged against the ground the instant I quitted the foot-board; such a bang! It not only shook every bone in my body, but I felt persuaded that at least half of them must certainly be broken.

"The train went whirling past. I believe that the current of air it left behind did me good. By the time that I was on my feet, and satisfying myself that, so far as I could perceive, no bones of any consequence were shat-

tered, after all, the red lights on the rear car were already only specks in the distance. The train had not been stopped; it was still whirling on.

"I was so shaken, so confused and stupid, that it was some seconds before I recollected what it was that I had now to do. Then I began to stumble awkwardly toward the Three Bridges end of the tunnel.

"By degrees, as my head got clearer and my limbs more under my own control, I quickened my pace, until presently I was making as much speed as, under the circumstances, was possible toward freedom and the light, my object being to get to the end of the tunnel before the train could make Balcombe station and word could be sent to the man in the signal-box which, I knew, was within, perhaps, two hundred yards of the other end, to keep a sharp lookout for my appearance.

"Balcombe Tunnel is the second longest tunnel on the Brighton line, and it's apt to be damp. I discovered that then, if I had not been aware of it before. To travel, in darkness which could be cut with a knife, perhaps six hundred yards over slippery, uneven, unseen ground, with a mysterious something—which felt like liquid grease—dropping on you as you go, is an experience of a singular kind.

"I kept to the wall on my right as closely as I could, being aware that no other train would be likely to come that side for some time.

"Once I had a fright in spite of myself. I heard a train approaching from behind; and though my common sense told me that it must be on the other line, and, therefore, at a safe distance from where I was, the roar it made filled the whole dreadful place to such an indescribable extent that I felt there could be no room there for it and me, and that it was advancing like an avenging monster to compass my destruction.

"I fought against the feeling at first; but as the train came nearer and nearer, and the roar grew more and more, my reason gave way to panic fear, and I crouched against the sticky, foul-smelling wall, like some shivering cur, trem-

bling as with the expectation that each moment might be my last.

"As the train went rushing past I am not sure that I did not actually cry out. It had gone, and was out of sight, before I understood that I was really safe, and then I was shaking so that my legs refused to hold me straight.

"The train had left behind it suffocating smoke and vapor through which, after awhile, I recommenced stumbling blindly on. How long it was before I perceived a pencil of light gleaming afar off I cannot say. As a matter of fact, I believe that the gleam was there some time before, in my stupidity, I understood what it meant. When I did understand I moved faster and faster, until at last I came out into the daylight at a run.

"I came out into the blazing sun, which I found so dazzling that, for some precious seconds, I stood blinking foolishly. Then I remembered the man in the signal-box, who, probably by now, would be on the lookout for me.

"Fortunately, the box itself was hidden by a bend. He would have to leave it to get a glimpse of me. I doubted if he would venture to do that. I began to scramble up the bank, which was covered with trees and bushes.

"I gained the top of the bank, to find myself brought up by a hedge which bounded a cottage garden. I had come on it so suddenly that I had no time to duck down before I realized that it was there, so that if there had been any one in the garden, or even at the window, he or she would have spotted me at once. But the garden seemed deserted; it suddenly struck me as being possible that that was the case with the cottage, too. It was a tiny, ancient, thatched building, consisting of, I suppose, at the most, two rooms. The windows were closed; there was no smoke rising from the single chimney; the place wore what seemed to me to be a deserted air.

"In less than no time I was over the hedge, in the garden, stealing across it into the house. I peered through the small latticed window, but could see no one within. Gaining the door, I rapped with my knuckles. First softly; then,

as no answer came, more loudly. As, still, there was no response, I turned the handle, opening the door an inch or two, and then walked in.

"The moment I had crossed the threshold I perceived that, after all, the place had an occupant; a woman sat in an easy chair, and looked at me. I was so taken by surprise, and, I fancy, so conscience-stricken, that I could only stand like a petrified idiot and gape. When I recovered myself my impulse was to back out again, and bolt. But, so soon as I moved, the woman spoke.

"'You need not run away; I know who you are.'

"At her words I stared still more. She had a curiously quiet voice, which I think one finds in people who speak but seldom. Her hair was white, and on her face was a peculiar pallor. As I continued to look it began to dawn on me that there was something singular in her attitude; it was so very rigid. Hers was an old grandfather's chair, whose cretonne covering had been patched so often that but little of the original material was left; and she sat back in it so straight and upright that one perceived there must be some cause for the erectness of her position.

"'You know me?' I stammered. 'What do you mean?' Then, remembering, began again to back out. 'I—I beg your pardon; I did not know there was any one here; you did not answer when I knocked.'

"She stayed me again.

"'Stop! Did I not tell you not to go? Did I not say I know you?'

"'But how can you know me? I do not recollect ever having seen you before.'

"'You are a prisoner escaped from Lewes jail. My husband was a prisoner who escaped from Lewes jail. That is how I know you.'

"While I was silent, amazed at her manner of putting the thing, she continued, in the same odd, lifeless whisper:

"'They sent my husband to Lewes jail for poaching. He had not done it; but they sent him, all the same. And while he was there he heard that I had

a baby, so he escaped and came to me. And while he was holding the baby in his arms the men from the prison burst into the room and found him. They rushed at him so that the baby was thrown from his arms and fell on to the floor and was killed, there, before my eyes, as I lay in bed. When he saw that they had killed my baby he fought with them as if he had gone stark mad, so that they nearly killed him, too. And when they got him outside, in spite of the handcuffs and the way they had handled him, he broke away from them again, and ran down the slope on to the railway. As he got on to the line a train came out of the tunnel and knocked him down and cut him in two, so that I lost my husband and my baby both in the same hour.

"'I've never moved out of this room since then. And that's more than five-and-thirty years ago. I've always known that some one else would come to me who had escaped from Lewes jail. And now you've come. I hope that the men from the prison won't find you as they found him.'

"She told her story in her sepulchral whisper, in a dry, matter-of-fact sort of way which made me shiver. I fancied I could see the frenzied wretch—her husband—plunging down the bank which I had just now climbed, only to be dashed to pieces by the roaring monster as it came rushing out of the tunnel. It seemed quite on the cards that his fate might be mine. I said so.

"'I'm afraid that the men from the prison will quickly find me if I can't find some clothes to exchange for these which proclaim me for what I am.'

"She was silent, as if considering what I had said.

"'I've no men's clothes. You should have them if I had. I've only a man's hat; it's there on the peg.'

"On a peg was a battered straw hat. It was not much in the way of a disguise; but, still, it was at least something on account, and, perhaps, better than nothing. I had left my own cap behind me in the train. But it seemed that in offering me the hat she had not come to the end of her resources.

"There's my sister's waterproof. I used to be six foot one as a lass, and to-day she's taller than ever I was. It'd cover you pretty well all over, and it's as fit for a man as for a woman. You can take that, too. You're welcome to it for her; if she was in this room she'd tell you so with her own mouth. She's no fonder of the men from the prison than I am."

"Well, I tried on the waterproof to which she referred; I was still wearing it when you appeared. Her sister must be a giantess, because, as she put it, it not only covered me pretty well all over, but it shrouded me entirely. Indeed, unless I held myself very straight, the skirts trailed in the dust, as a woman's might have done. She was also quite correct in stating that it was as suited to a man as to a woman."

"Enveloped in the waterproof cloak, crowned with the battered straw hat, although I must have presented a somewhat incongruous spectacle in a country lane on a summer's day, at least the uniform beneath was hidden, and I doubt if I looked a more remarkable object than some of the tramps who patronize our rural roads."

"I marched for over three hours along the Handcross Lane and across country here; and though the few people I passed stared as I went by, and, perhaps, some of them, when I had gone, paused to stare again, none of them seemed to notice anything strange enough about me to warrant them in making uncomfortable remarks or asking awkward questions."

"I arrived home safely, only to find—when I had gained my haven of refuge—that, by one of fate's little ironies, I had apparently done all that I had done in vain."

Frank Thornton ceased. As he did so he pressed his mother closer to his side. She, putting up her hands, drew his face down to hers and kissed him very tenderly.

"My boy!" she murmured. "My dear, dear boy!"

George Otway, before he spoke, regarded them, as they caressed each other, with a queer light in his eyes.

"I don't understand you when you say that you have apparently done it all in vain."

"Why, the thing is very simple, and—if it were not to me a question almost of life and death—not without its humorous side. Now that I have reached home, it appears that the only masculine garments the house contains are my father's, who happens himself to be away, and as he is about my mother's height, his clothes are not likely to be of much use to me. Since I cannot start out again into the night garbed like this, because, sooner or later, detection is bound to come, you will yourself perceive that I don't seem likely to gain much by leaping out of that train in the tunnel."

"It is only a question of clothes?"

"Only! The mischief is that it's such a large 'only'!"

"Not at all. It seems to be part of my destiny recently to change clothes with other people. I shall be delighted, my dear Thornton, to change clothes with you."

"To change clothes with me!"

As the two men stood staring at each other there was heard, echoing through the quiet house, the tinkling of a bell.

CHAPTER XVII.

A TRANSFORMATION.

As the tinkling of the bell died away, Mrs. Thornton said, half smiling as she observed the tense expression which was on the two men's faces:

"This time I don't fancy there's any need for apprehension. I think it's Lizzie, my small maid; it has been her evening out. In order that we may have the house a little longer to ourselves I will invent an errand which will take her to the other side of the village."

As soon as the old lady had left the room, George Otway turned to her son.

"Now, Thornton, I'll cut the Gordian knot, change clothes! That'll get you out of your tangle. I'll don his majesty's uniform, for, after all, it is his

majesty's!"—this with a whimsical look—"and you shall get into mine."

"But I don't understand, or, perhaps, I should rather say that I don't think you do. You don't realize that you'd be committing an offense, half-a-dozen, for all I know. First, in aiding a felon to escape; and then, if you went masquerading round the country in this attire, I'm not sure they wouldn't charge you with stealing it, and all sorts of things. I'm convinced they'd find you guilty of a variety of dreadful crimes, so that you'd end by being in a worse plight than I am."

"My dear fellow, these things are trifles; it's you who don't understand. The point, as I take it, is this: if you have a day or two's law you'll be able to establish your innocence in the eyes of all the world; isn't that so?"

"I believe I shall be able to do so within a very few hours, if I'm only able to get within reach of the man I'm after."

"Just so! Then I shall figure as a hero. People will say: 'Just see what this man did so that the truth might be brought to light—actually dressed himself in prison clothes! Wasn't it noble of him?' You catch the idea? I shall be the recipient of the public applause, and I shall have had my adventure into the bargain. I give you my word that there are few things my soul loves like a well-spiced adventure."

"But——"

"'But me no buts!' The thing's settled! Jump out of those clothes and into mine."

"But you must let me say a word."

"Not half a one! 'Do first, talk afterward;' that's a motto worth your earnest attention. Seriously, the hunters are not likely to give the quarry a longer start than they can help; if you don't look alive it'll be your fault if I get into serious trouble. So up-stairs and effect the transformation, and come! come! come!"

As, with his arm through Frank's, he was urging him toward the door, Mrs. Thornton reentered the room.

"Come?" she echoed. "Where?"

She stared at the pair in front of her, as if puzzled by the fact that both of them seemed to be amused. It was Otway who answered:

"To the bedroom of this son of yours, Mrs. Thornton. I suppose he has a bedroom. You must know that I'm in search of adventure, and he's going to put me in the way of as fine a one as the heart of man could wish for. He's going to lend me this elegant suit of his, so that I can pretend that it's me who preferred Balcombe Tunnel to Lewes jail, and he's going off in those commonplace garments of mine, as a mere ordinary citizen who has never heard of Balcome Tunnel. Within four-and-twenty hours he'll have shown that he's another victim of blind injustice, and I shall be posing as something really almost heroic, don't you know?"

The wonder was still on Mrs. Thornton's trouble-worn countenance.

"But, Mr. Otway, if you are in earnest——"

"If I am in earnest! Don't I look as if I were in earnest?"

"Then why should you do this thing—for us?"

"Have I not been telling your son that the passion of my life is a love of adventure? And must I tell you again?" He drew himself up straighter, with something new in his eyes and in his voice. "And then, won't you understand that I have met your daughter and would meet her again? And that I hold her in such esteem that I cannot stomach the thought that she's a brother who's—you'll forgive me, Thornton—supposed to be a felon. If he can show that he's not—as he will do if he's a chance, and that soon—by giving him that chance I shall have made her happy, and shall esteem myself fortunate to have been able to render her so great a service. You see, Mrs. Thornton, that is my point of view. It's a purely selfish one, tending in the end only to my own advantage; so if you'll encourage this young gentleman to lose no more time I shall be so much nearer the attainment of my wishes. Therefore, Frank Thornton, if you please, up-stairs."

He held the door open with a flourish, and the pair passed through.

In a little bedroom, whose open window looked out onto a glory of roses, the metamorphosis took place; to all outward seeming the honest man became a felon and the felon an honest man. It was all done, too, with surprising swiftness.

Somewhat to the younger man's bewilderment, Otway kept laughing to himself all the time. He was thinking of that first exchange with Jacob Gunston, and of all the singular consequences which had ensued. Some similarity between that occasion and this, or, perhaps, some contrast, seemed to tickle him consummately.

"What are you laughing at?" demanded Thornton, when, for the third time, the other broke into a series of chuckles.

"Thoughts, my dear Thornton, thoughts! I was thinking of what great consequences come from little causes, and of how much may result from a change of clothes. By the way, have you a razor?"

"I believe you'll find an old one in the wash-hand-stand drawer; I left one there, I know. What do you want a razor for? To cut your throat actually, instead of metaphorically, as, for all you can tell, you may be doing now?"

"Not exactly, sir—not exactly. I want a razor to enable me to remove my beard—for nothing more formidable than that."

"Remove your beard? Otway, you're not going to disfigure yourself because of a sudden freak like this!"

"I'm not so sure that the result will be disfigurement; and, anyhow, it will grow again. Beards will grow, you know, even when they have been shaved. It's a principle of mine to do a thing thoroughly if I do it at all. I'm going to do this thing as thoroughly as it can be done, you can bet on that."

"Those pursuing friends of yours are going to be fooled as neatly as they ever have been, or you can call me names. Those of them who are hottest on the trail will have your description, even though they may never have seen you

in the flesh. If I've a beard, if I'm the hairy monster that I am by nature, they'll know at once that I'm not you. The clothes won't deceive them. On the contrary, they'll perceive exactly what has taken place. And that won't suit my book at all. I want them to take me for you, not only at first, but right along."

"Take you for me! My dear Mr. Otway, even with the best will in the world to commit suicide—and it seems you have it—even you can't work miracles."

"I'm not so sure. It depends on what you mean by miracles, so much lies in the meaning of a word. You see, beard, whiskers, and mustache are gone, with half-a-dozen strokes. Already, I'm not the man I was; indeed, I hardly know myself."

The alteration was singular. The fair, well-trimmed beard and mustache had vanished, and instead there was a smooth-faced man, with a square, strong chin, a well-shaped, laughing mouth, and rounded cheeks which were flushed with health.

"Why," exclaimed Thornton, "you look a dozen years younger!"

Otway laughed.

"Thank you. Then it would appear that the disfigurement is not so serious as you had feared. You see, I'm coming back to you. The next point is, my hair's too long. I saw a pair of scissors somewhere. Ah, here they are upon this chest of drawers. They've done their day's work, but still they'll do another. If I plant myself upon this chair you can play barber?"

"Play barber? Do you mean, can I cut your hair?"

"Well, I don't know that that is quite the phrase, because I don't mean cut in any artistic sense; but can you reduce the hair which is on my head to the dimensions of the hair which still remains on yours? You see, mine's in the fashion of the world; yours is in—another fashion. I can't hack at it myself, but don't you think you could? I shouldn't fancy that it requires much skill."

"It doesn't. I imagine that the man who operated on me had never officiated

as hairdresser before. If you want your hair to look like mine I don't doubt my capacity to make it."

"Good. Fall to! Don't clip pieces off my ears, and make as few incisions in my skin as possible. That's all I ask."

"Then you ask more than I was able to. The man who handled me used his scissors on more than my hair. He made such a sight of me, indeed, that when I showed myself to the warder that officer declined to allow him to handle anybody else. So I believe that I am the first and last example of his tonsorial powers."

"Steady! that's my flesh; I should say you've nipped off about an inch or so."

"I beg your pardon. I'm very sorry, I'm sure." Thornton paused to regard his work, so far as it had gone. "I'm afraid I'm making an awful hash of it."

"I'm afraid you are. It's what I hoped for. Go on. See the thing well through. The result will be quite up to the official standard."

"Otway, why are you making a spectacle of yourself like this, to speak of nothing else? I can't conceive why you should do it for me."

"I'm not doing it for you; put that idea behind you. I'm doing it for your sister. I will be frank. I don't see you in the matter at all; I only see her."

Thornton was contemplatively tapping the comb and the scissors together.

"It is odd to feel like that about a woman."

"It is. I hope, for your own sake, that you'll feel like that when your turn comes. It's one of the few feelings which are worth having."

"What makes it odder is that it should be for Elsie. If it had been for another girl—— I know a girl——"

"Do you?"

"Yes; I do. Now, for her—— But for Elsie, somehow, it's different, and that makes it so funny. Of course, she's a trump and all that, but——well, you see, she's my sister."

"That's just what I do see. What I don't see is why you're not going on with this hair-mowing job of yours.

Now, as close as you please, but don't dig your shears into the soil."

Soon Thornton announced that his task was concluded.

"What do you think of that?"

"Nothing; or, rather, I think so much I'd rather not say what I do think." Otway was contemplating himself in the mirror. "I tell you what it is, Thornton, if we weren't in the position we are in, I should ask you to step outside and explain what you mean by it. If you couldn't manage your fists any better than you do a pair of scissors you'd have trouble."

"You made me do it. I knew I should make a botch of the thing."

"You knew right. It'd be a fair exchange for me now to have a cut at you, but the mischief is you've nothing left to cut at. I couldn't jab at your ears with cold-blooded intention."

"I only just touched one of yours."

"That's all, with an accent on the *just*. You might have treated them both alike; it shows a kind of partiality which the one just touched resents. What's in this bottle?"

"Permanganate of potash. Otway, be careful! Don't let it touch your hands; it will stain them, if you do!"

"It will, if it's of decent quality and the virtue's not all gone out of it."

Otway was pouring some of the contents of a bottle, which he had taken off the mantel-shelf, into the palm of his hand, which he had shaped like a cup. Thornton was observing his proceedings with some show of perturbation.

"Otway, don't be an ass! don't play any tricks! What are you up to? It will dye your hair!"

"That's what I'm anticipating, if well rubbed into the roots. You see, Thornton, you're a dark man; that'll be all set down in the description. If they find out that within a few hours you've been turned into a fair one, they'll wonder, and I don't want them to wonder about anything. If they once start wondering, the pretty little trick I am proposing to play them will be spoiled; I shall have done all these things in vain.

Thank you; I'm obliged by your solicitude; but my disappointment will only begin when I find that this stuff won't make what's left of my hair into, literally, a colorable imitation of yours."

He was rubbing handfuls of permanganate of potash on to his head with results which were again surprising. His fair hair was disappearing as his beard and mustache had done, and his scalp was becoming crowned with what looked like inky locks instead. The effect, as he saw it in the looking-glass, seemed to afford him satisfaction.

"That's not so bad—not by any means so bad for a tyro in the art of hair-dyeing! Your candid opinion, Thornton. Don't I look about the top as if nature had intended me to play *Othello*?"

"I don't know if you have such a relative; but you're rapidly approaching a point at which your own brother wouldn't know you, if you haven't reached it already."

"How goes the pink and white complexion with the coal-black hair?"

"Well, it looks striking, anyhow. It's not the sort of combination you're always meeting. If you want to attract attention you've gone the right way to do it."

"That's right; smile, my simple-minded youth! You don't suppose I'm going to leave a work of art half finished, or that I'm going to spoil a masterpiece by omitting a necessary detail? I'm not that kind of person. The thing that's bothering me is how I'm going to attain to your olive skin; as a complexion producer, permanganate of potash seems a trifle drastic."

"I promise you that you're not going to disfigure yourself to that extent for Elsie's sake or for any one's."

Snatching up the bottle which the other had been using, Thornton threw it out of the open window. Otway only laughed.

"Dear me! here's an autocrat! throwing one of the finest disinfecting fluids going into the blackness of night! Didn't I tell you that my inclination didn't lean that way? I fancy this will suit me better."

"Man! that's polishing cream for brown boots!"

"Exactly; that's why I'm using it; I want it to make me brown."

Before Thornton could stop him, Otway—with closed eyes and tightly shut mouth—was smearing brown polishing liquid, not only all over his face, but over his neck and shoulders as well. By the time the process was concluded the final touch had been put to the transformation; no one would have recognized in this dark-skinned, black-haired, smooth-faced creature, with the nearly shaven crown, clad in the hideous brick-colored clothes, liberally ornamented with broad arrows, the immaculately attired, sunny-faced George Otway who had entered the room.

Nor was the alteration which had taken place in Frank Thornton's appearance very much less striking. Although the other's garments hung on him a little loosely they fitted him very fairly, on the whole—certainly they served to bring his handsome personality into striking relief—a fact on which the other promptly commented.

"I say, Thornton, I had no idea what a good-looking chap you were. I'm afraid it's the lamentable truth that it is the tailor who makes the man!"

"And I had no idea that I could be so easily persuaded to allow another man—and he a stranger—to suffer in my place. And I'll be hanged if I stand it even now—you make me writhe with shame as I look at you. See here, Mr. Otway——"

"See here, Mr. Thornton, what money have you on you?"

"Money!—not a stiver!"

"I think you have. In the pockets you'll find some loose gold and silver, amounting, I believe, to between five and six pounds, and in the letter-case which is in the inside breast pocket of the coat are notes for fifty more."

"Do you think I'll take your money?"

"I'm sure you will, unless you wish me to brain you with a poker. That amount of cash should be enough to see you off; so off you go, and good luck go with you."

"I'll not go. I tell you that I see the position as it really is at last. I'll not permit you to make a martyr of yourself for me—I'm not cur enough to suffer that."

"Thornton, the man in your position who will not snatch at a chance to cleanse himself from the shame which stains him within and without is a cur unspeakable. As your sister's brother, you shall not be that thing—if I can help it. You shall not encircle your sister's life—and your mother's life—with a halo of dishonor. I would rather take you by the throat, and show, that way, who is the stronger of the twain. You say you can prove your innocence. I am giving you the chance—freely, gladly, surely; prove it, sir. If you are the felon your prison guardians think you are, then off with those clothes again, back into your own. In that case—and in that case only—they will become you better than any others."

"I am as guiltless of the offense with which I'm charged as you are!"

"Then prove it—prove it! Don't stand there talking, chopping phrases, splitting hairs, wasting time, knowing that the hounds, who bring ruin, are on your track, but do! do! do! To be caught, and jailed again—that's to slam the door of heaven in your face—to be condemned forever to the uttermost courts of hell. For me—let them come!

let them take me—if they can! What does it matter?—what's the odds? It's an adventure, an experience, a new sensation, a game I'm playing, which I shall win in the end, and so laugh in their faces, especially if you're a true man, and not a liar, and can establish your innocence as you say you can."

"If I only thought——"

"Pardon me, Mr. Thornton, it is not a question of what you think, as you will perceive yourself a little later on. Come down-stairs; say good-by to your mother, and play the man."

He half led, half pushed him down to the room where the mother was waiting, watching, listening, with anxious heart. She exclaimed at sight of them.

"How long you've been! I was afraid—— Why, Frank, I didn't know you. And—who is this?"

Otway laughed.

"This, Mrs. Thornton, is yours obediently to command, George Otway, dressed for a fancy ball, which your son is immediately about to open. Now, Thornton, what's your program?"

"I thought I'd walk to Hayford, a village about a couple of miles off, and take a trap from there to the other branch of the Brighton line, and so get on to town."

"Excellent! away you go! The next news we shall expect to have of you is that the guilty man's confessed!"

TO BE CONTINUED.



THE RESULT OF A KISS

THEY were in a magnificently decorated room in a Fifth Avenue mansion. They approached each other from opposite directions. One of them was as pale as a ghost, the other blushing red as a cherry.

Presently they met, and, careless of the fact that dozens of eyes were watching them, they kissed each other.

The meeting seemed to bring them perfect peace; but, alas! they had scarcely been side by side above twenty seconds when a man approached with the fire of battle in his eye.

With cool insolence he raised the stick he carried, and then—oh, horror!—he struck a sharp, quick blow, and the pale one was sent spinning several feet away.

The other neither screamed nor fainted.

There was no heart-breaking, no resentment, not even a murmur.

Because, you see, billiard-balls are used to that sort of thing!

The Adventures of Felix Boyd

By Scott Campbell

Author of "Below the Dead Line," Etc.

III.—THE ACE OF DIAMONDS

(A Complete Story)



BOYD briefly paused to listen at the closed door.

It was in an offshoot from the broad, main corridor on the second floor of one of the most famous hotels

in New York City—an offshoot giving access to a series of rooms in the east part of the house, where the side elevation of the vast edifice rose above a narrow court making in from the front street.

Mr. Felix Boyd had availed himself of a side entrance in the court, and had deliberately stolen up to the door mentioned, bent upon quietly learning precisely where the room was situated, or anything else that might come in his way.

He had located it with some difficulty, for he had received only the number of the room in the hurried telephone call sent him just after he entered his Union Square office at half-past eight that morning—a message conveying the startling information that a man had just been found dead in the room, evidently murdered in a card game the previous night.

Three small metal figures attached to the door, each being separate, indicated the number of the room — 119. Who now will say with Rory O'More that there's luck in odd numbers? Surely not, if speech could come from the gray

lips of the still, white form lying dead in Room 119.

It then was barely nine o'clock, for Boyd had hastened to respond to the call, which he conjectured came from Haddon, the business-manager of the famous house, and one of his personal friends.

He had glanced into the magnificent office before entering, as well as into the elaborate bar and the adjoining café; but he could detect no indications of unusual excitement, and he readily had inferred that the news of the tragic fatality had been suppressed, pending the first official investigations.

Yet the several public rooms mentioned were thronged, even at that early hour, with men in animated conversation, the house being the popular resort of numberless politicians, wealthy men about town, with no end of bankers and brokers who habitually dropped in to discuss the market outlook for the day before hastening down to Wall Street, or to place a bet on the result of the approaching election, a contest made memorable by the intensely bitter fight between the opposing candidates for district attorney—the Honorable Harvey McShane, Tammany's legal bright light; and young Philip Farley, the reform nominee on the Fusion ticket.

Boyd briefly paused to listen at the closed door, as stated, incidentally noting again the number nearly oppo-

site his clean-cut face; and while he gazed at it, though his mind was chiefly bent upon the faint sounds from within the room, his eyes took on that more intent expression which indicated some unexpected and curious discovery.

Before he could seriously consider it, however, the door was abruptly opened from within, and his acquaintance, the business-manager of the house—a portly, florid man of fifty—appeared on the threshold.

Boyd greeted him with an insouciant smile.

“Good morning, Haddon,” said he blandly. “I was just about to rap. What about a card game here, and a murder said to have been committed in——”

“See for yourself, Felix,” interposed Haddon, with a move to lead the famous young detective into the room, the interior of which still was masked by a tall silk screen placed at an angle within.

Boyd deferred entering, however, and quickly drew Haddon into the silent corridor.

“Stop a moment,” said he quietly. “Who is in there, Joe?”

“Only Sampson, one of the hall-boys, and the chambermaid who discovered the crime,” Haddon hurriedly replied. “I have kept it quiet till you or the men from the Central Office should arrive.”

“Then you have sent word to headquarters, also?”

“Yes; certainly. I am appalled by the shocking——”

“Stay. Do you know the victim?”

“Know him!” gasped Haddon hoarsely. “Why, it’s Harvey McShane, the Tammany candidate for district attorney.”

“The devil you say!”

“Come in and——”

“Still, wait a moment,” persisted Boyd, with brows knit closer. “I’ll presently enter with you, and I will go to the bottom of the affair.”

His inscrutable gray eyes had drifted again toward the number on the partly closed door; and Haddon

hastened to rejoin, with nervous agitation:

“It’s for that I have appealed to you, Felix, for I have no great faith in the men from Mulberry Street, particularly if politics cuts any ice in this deplorable affair.”

“I wish only to settle a few points in my mind before viewing the evidence in the room,” Boyd quickly explained. “Are card games, Joe, a regular pastime in this house?”

“No, not poker games,” said Haddon, with a frown of obvious regret over the inevitable exposure that now must follow. “This one, however, has been a regular thing for weeks. I allowed it only to confer a favor upon Chauncey Delmore, the banker, to whom I am under some obligations. It has been kept rigidly quiet, Felix, and seldom has lasted later than the early hours of the evening.”

“Who are the players?”

“Invariably the same, a half-dozen bankers and brokers who drop in here about four in the afternoon. They want a little mental relaxation between the closing of business and their dinner hour, and I have let them occupy this room for upward of two months.”

“For their game only?”

“Yes.”

“Always this room?”

“Yes.”

“Give me their names, Joe. Nay, don’t frown. I’ll be discreet, if possible, though it now looks to me as if an exposure were inevitable.”

“Alas! I fear so,” groaned Haddon. “The players comprise Delmore and John Bebee, the bankers——”

“I know them well.”

“Also Rodney Hargrave, Paul Damon, Jerry Sanderson, and Karl Steinfort,” added Haddon. “The last four are stock-brokers and——”

“I know them by name, some of them personally,” Boyd again interposed. “Were all of them here yesterday?”

“I did not see them come or go, yet I imagine so.”

“Have you sent word to any of them?”

“I have sent a message to Hargrave’s

home in Fifty-ninth Street; asking him to come down here at once. His was the only address I happened to have. I did not state what had occurred here, yet——"

"He should know all about it, Joe, if this man was killed during the card game, or because of it," put in Boyd. "No disturbance was reported to you yesterday afternoon or evening?"

"No; none."

"Were you in the office as usual?"

"Yes, from three o'clock till nine."

"You did not see any of the players leave the house?"

"I did not, Felix, yet that is not strange. They usually have departed by the side stairway yonder and through the court exit. They may have done so last evening. This has been their habit only in order that their game should not be suspected by acquaintances who might have desired to sit into it."

"It has been confined to the players mentioned, has it?"

"So I am told, and I believe that to be true."

"How, then, came McShane to be in the room last evening?"

"I do not know," declared Haddon with a dismal head-shake. "I infer that one of the players must have invited him to the room, though it has been their rule to exclude any spectators. Hargrave, when he arrives, should be able to explain why McShane was there."

"Very probably," admitted Boyd. "I see there is a Yale lock on the door. Has each of the players a key?"

"Yes. I provided them at the request of Delmore."

"Who else has a key?"

"Only the chambermaid who looks after the room."

"The girl who discovered the crime?"

"Yes, the same."

"When did she make the discovery?"

"Less than half an hour ago," replied Haddon. "She entered the room as usual to put it in order, but she found the electric lamps still burning and McShane lying dead on the floor. Her scream, as she emerged, was heard

by Sampson, who was passing through the corridor. Upon learning what had happened, he quickly silenced her, then sent word for me. I commanded both to let everything in the room lie untouched, then hastened to telephone to you and the Central Office."

"A wise precaution, Joe, that of letting things lie," observed Boyd approvingly. "Wasn't it noticed that the lamps in the room were burning throughout the night? I see there is no transom, yet the reflection might have been seen beneath the door."

"It was so seen," acknowledged Haddon; "but the night clerk only inferred that the game in the room had been unusually prolonged, and was lasting through the night. I should have thought the same, Felix, if the circumstance had been reported to me."

"Very naturally, I am sure," Boyd commented. "Now, Joe, I will see what the room has to offer in the way of evidence, and then—— Ah, here are your men from the Central Office, Joe, if one may judge from the hurried and heavy tread. Odd, isn't it, that an experienced detective will allow mental excitement to reflect itself even in his feet. It indicates that he is not well bred to his work, but goes at things like a bull at a gate, instead of—— Ah, is it you, Jimmie? I was near backcapping you unworthily. Good morning, Akerman."

The grim countenance of Jimmie Coleman, Felix Boyd's one and only intimate friend among the Central Office detectives, lighted a bit oddly when he beheld Boyd in the subdued light of the corridor.

"Are you always in the foreground?" he muttered with a bantering growl. "What the devil's up, Felix, to warrant this?"

"With Haddon's permission, Jimmie, we will step in and see. I have only just arrived," added Mr. Felix Boyd with a semi-quizzical drawl.

His gaze, however, as they entered the room, again drifted with searching scrutiny toward the small, metal numbers on the open door.

It was a large, square room, with two

windows opening upon the court mentioned. Both were closed, however, and the curtains and heavy tapestry draperies were closely drawn. The confined atmosphere was heavy with the odor of stale tobacco smoke and the sickening scent of dead cigar stumps lying in the several dainty, ash-laden trays on a large, round, cloth-covered table occupying the middle of the room.

Six armchairs were pushed back in some disorder, while scattered over the cloth were two decks of playing-cards, some face up, and all as if hurriedly thrown down at the last moment prior to a hasty departure by the occupants of the several chairs.

On a sideboard near one of the handsomely frescoed walls were several decanters and glasses, the latter with the dregs of liquor in them; while one, half-filled, still stood untasted on the gaming-table.

The electric lamps still burned brightly above these signs of dissipation, yet their brilliancy was paled by the daylight stealing in, and the combination cast a sallow glow over the dismal scene—doubly dismal when one contemplated the prostrate figure on the richly carpeted floor.

Lying between two of the chairs, an imposing figure, rigid in the grip of death, with his arms outstretched, with his ghastly face upturned, with his reddish mop of hair matted about a gaping wound in his fractured skull, was all that was mortal of the Honorable Harvey McShane, the Tammany candidate for district attorney.

Had the bitter political fight of the past two months ended, almost on the eve of the election, only in this?

The pertinent question, irresistibly reflecting upon McShane's fiery political opponent, had leaped up in the mind of every man save one—Mr. Felix Boyd.

II.

"Good Lord! McShane dead—murdered!"

Jimmie Coleman gasped the exclamations in accents of swelling horror.

He would have added more had not Felix Boyd, with curious quietude, abruptly cut him short.

"We have more to do with the living than the dead," he curtly remarked. "Hark you, girl, and you, my man! Are things precisely as you found them?"

The last was addressed to a liveried hall-boy and the chambermaid mentioned by Haddon, both of whom were standing mute and pale in the same corner.

An affirmative answer was simultaneously made, and Boyd then curtly demanded:

"Go about your duties, girl, and say nothing at present of this affair. You, Sampson, close the door and remain near by in the corridor. Admit no person without rapping."

There was the subtle ring of quickened determination in Boyd's keen, incisive voice. It was reflected, too, in his eyes, now darkly dilating under his knit brows.

Turning quickly to his companions, as the servants hurriedly withdrew, he said crisply:

"Kindly repeat to these officers, Haddon, the facts you stated to me. Meantime, Jimmie, I'll look into the evidence here and see what I can make of it. This is murder—no doubt of it—and the truth must be learned without avoidable delay."

Haddon hastened to comply, and the Central Office men to listen; not one of them perceived that Felix Boyd thus aimed only to dip alone for a few moments into the evidence confronting him.

Amazing rapidity; the quietude of a shadow; the precision of one definitely impelled, of one who knew exactly what he wished to learn, and exactly how to go about it—these were characteristics of the work of Felix Boyd at such a time; and all the while the gleam deep down in his searching eyes became more intense, the line of his thin, firm lips more and more severe.

First, upon the floor beside the stricken man he knelt, gripping one dead,

cold hand, then turning the body slightly to obtain a better look at the wounded head. As he did the last the watch in McShane's vest pocket slipped out, as if it had been only carelessly deposited therein, and fell to one side. The faint tinkle of broken glass accompanied the fall, and Boyd quickly took up the watch and opened the hunting-case.

The broken crystal crumbled into the palm of his hand.

He tossed it upon the floor, then briefly studied the face exposed. The watch had stopped. The case was slightly bent, as if damaged by a blow. The hour indicated by the watch was half-past eleven.

With lips slightly twitching, the one and only sign of his intense mental activity, Boyd drew a small but powerful lens from his vest pocket and examined the face more intently. Then he tried the stem-winder, only to find that the works had been so damaged that the hands would not move.

The line between his knit brows deepened perceptibly.

"Half-past eleven!" he murmured under his breath.

With a curiously impatient movement he replaced the watch in McShane's vest pocket, then rose to his feet.

As if under an impression that some cheating in the game might have led to the crime, he next fell to studying the cards scattered over the table. One in particular, lying near the edge of the table opposite the chair nearest the dead man, chiefly claimed his attention.

It was lying face up—the ace of diamonds.

At one edge of the card were several tiny indentures, as if made with a small, sharply pointed instrument. Again the lens came into play, and after a moment Boyd so turned the card that the light from above was so reflected from its glazed surface as to meet his intent gaze.

Yet, after thirty seconds he tossed the card back upon the table and let it remain there.

Next he examined the several glasses

on the sideboard, sniffing the dregs in each; and upon setting down the last, he bent abruptly forward to study several faint lines or scratches on the polished surface of the sideboard. They were nearly back of a large china cracker-jar, and would have been invisible but for the gleam of the polished surface surrounding them.

Boyd's closer inspection, however, revealed one curious fact—that what he at first had thought to be scratches were nothing of the kind. They were three dark hairs, several inches in length and inclined to curl slightly.

His first impression was that a woman must have been present at the time of the crime. Yet with scarce a moment's delay over the matter, he enclosed the curious bit of evidence between the leaves of his note-book and slipped the book into his pocket.

He hardly had done so when Coleman, abruptly turning from Haddon, curtly demanded:

"What do you find, Felix? Murder—I should say so! Do you find anything in the way of a reliable clue, or in explanation of so brutal a crime?"

The quiet intensity with which Felix Boyd had been at work vanished instantly.

"I'm not yet prepared to say, Jimmie," he glibly replied with an air of perplexity. "Let's have a better light here. I'll throw back the draperies and raise the curtains. Switch off those electric lamps, Akerman. God's light will serve us best."

While speaking he admitted a flood of daylight through both windows, accentuating the ghastly details of the scene; and then he did more—he raised one of the sashes upon finding the window unlocked, and leaned far out to peer down at the brick wall and the pavements of the court below.

Four feet to the left of the window was a narrow portico roof; that above the side entrance to the house. It was about three feet lower than the sill over which he was leaning; and, joining it from either direction was a protruding cornice of ornamental stone, which adorned this side elevation of the

building just above the windows on the ground floor.

Boyd gazed down at these features for a moment only, yet with eyes lighting a little; and then he drew back into the room, still wearing the inscrutable countenance with which he had evaded the curt inquiries of the Central Office man.

"Whew! A breath of air was refreshing!" he quietly exclaimed.

"But——"

"But what do I make of it, Jimmie? That's your question," Boyd crisply interrupted. "I'll tell you what I—— Ha! see who knocks."

A sharp rap had sounded on the door, and Haddon hastened to open it. From beyond the tall silk screen sounded the sonorous voice of Mr. Rodney Hargrave, the Wall Street broker, the one player in the game of the previous evening to whom word already had been sent.

"Anything wrong, Haddon?" he roundly inquired as he entered. "They told me in the office that you were up here. Your messenger said at my house that the business was imperative, but he could give me no idea of what it—— God above! What has happened here?"

He had passed the screen and come within view of the ghastly scene—a sturdy, broad-shouldered man above fifty, with smoothly shaven features, a protruding brow, below which gleamed a pair of narrow, black eyes, the exceeding brightness of which lent a sort of unnatural light to his otherwise phlegmatic countenance. Upon beholding the corpse he had shrunk as if struck a blow, his fleshy cheeks and heavy jowls turning a greenish yellow.

Mr. Felix Boyd came almost instantly to his relief, however.

"Ah, it is you, Hargrave," he cried with obvious satisfaction. "I'm glad you have arrived. You are the very man we want."

"Man you want!" Hargrave echoed the last with a half-smothered snarl of resentment, and wheeled heavily toward the detective. "Oh, is it you, Boyd?

What do you mean by that? You don't imply that I know aught of this?"

"No, no, far from it," cried Boyd, in hurried explanation. "I should have said, my dear Hargrave, that you are the very man who can aid us."

"Aid you?"

"You know McShane?"

"Know him!" cried Hargrave. "Certainly I know him. We are the best of friends—or were! I'm appalled by what I see here. I had no idea that this sort of business was the occasion of sending for me. When did it occur and who——"

"That's just what we want to learn, Mr. Hargrave, and why we think you may aid us," Boyd interposed, checking him with a gesture. "You were here last evening, I am told."

"Why, yes, I was," Hargrave reluctantly admitted, with a glance at Haddon, who abruptly exclaimed:

"I've told him the whole business, Rodney."

"About the card game?"

"Yes. There was nothing else to be done."

"True. I should have known as much," assented Hargrave. Then he reverted to Boyd and quickly added: "Yes, I was here with several friends till after eight o'clock, Mr. Boyd. Our card game broke up at that hour and we all departed."

"Who brought McShane here?"

"I do not know."

"He was not here during the game?"

"By no means. Nor any other outsider. There were but the six men who regularly have made up our game."

"Humph! Your disclosures only add to the mystery," growled Boyd more gravely. "This murder, then, was not the result of any altercation in the card game?"

"Altercation!" returned Hargrave disapprovingly. "Why, man, that idea is absurd. We are not the type of men who dispute over cards—to say nothing of doing murder! Our game is composed of gentlemen, not brawlers. We parted the best of friends, every man of us. Our game ended before

eight, as usual, and I was at home with my family at nine o'clock."

"Who was the last to leave here?" demanded Coleman, who was quite as mystified as Felix Boyd appeared to be.

"I was one of the last," replied the broker. "I left in company with Chauncey Delmore, the well-known banker, and we were the last to leave the room."

"Did you leave things as we see them, Hargrave, barring the body of McShane?"

"About so, I should say."

"The cards were scattered over the table?"

"Yes, we always leave the cleaning up for the girl to do."

"Did you leave the electric lamps burning?"

"Decidedly not!" exclaimed Hargrave. "Delmore extinguished them just as I reached the door. I remember that distinctly, for I had some little trouble in finding the knob."

"Did you lock the door after you?"

"I am equally sure of that, for I closed it securely, and it locks of itself. We left the house by the side exit, and I at once went home."

"Do you know whether any of the players—who alone have keys, I am told—afterward returned to this room?" Boyd now inquired, after yielding the floor to the Central Office man for a few moments.

"I do not," replied Hargrave, vigorously shaking his huge head. "I can speak only for myself. I walked home from here, and did not again leave my house."

"We seem to be more than ever in the dark, Jimmie," remarked Boyd, with a slight shrug of his shoulders.

"I should say so," growled Coleman, frowning grimly.

"See what you can make of this evidence, Jimmie, while I examine the lock on the corridor door. It may have been tampered with. I'll presently rejoin you."

He did not wait for a reply. Leaving Hargrave, Haddon, and the two detectives still engaged in their investigations, he stepped into the corridor

where Sampson still was lingering near the door.

"Ah, my man!" murmured Boyd, upon observing him. "You go and bring that chambermaid here. I wish to ask her a question."

The servant bowed and departed.

Again, when left alone in the silent corridor, there rose in the eyes of Felix Boyd that intensely eager interest which had vanished from the moment Coleman directly questioned him. Quickly turning, he whipped out his lens and fell to studying the three metal figures on the door.

After thirty seconds he darted to the door of the room adjoining, then to that of the next, and still the next, till he had examined in like manner the numbers on seven of the doors, on one side of the corridor or the other.

The last at which he paused, having moved with exceeding rapidity and quietude, bore in like metal figures the number—110.

There was an ugly gleam in his eyes when he returned to the door of Room 119, slipping the lens into his pocket. Sampson and the chambermaid were at that moment returning, and Boyd detained the girl only to ask, with indifferent interest, while he noted the color of her hair:

"Is it one of your daily duties to put this room in order?"

"Yes, sir," said the girl.

"When did you last do so?"

"Yesterday morning, sir."

"Were you alone in there at the time?"

"I was, sir."

"I presume you put the table and chairs in place, and also cleansed the liquor glasses and dusted the furniture?"

"Yes, sir, I did. I always do all that, sir."

"Did you dust the sideboard yesterday morning?"

"Indeed, sir, I did."

"You are quite sure of that?"

"As sure as that I am standing here, sir."

"That's all, my girl. You may go, and you, Sampson, also."

There was a look of threatening austerity on Boyd's thin, clean-cut face when he reentered Room 119. His voice, too, had an ominous ring not observable a few minutes before. Without a glance at Hargrave or the Central Office men, he strode straight up to Haddon and demanded:

"Joe, who occupies Room 110?"

The florid hue in Haddon's cheeks waned perceptibly.

"Room 110?" he faltered.

"Wasn't my question plain?" cried Boyd sharply. "Do you know? Or shall I send down and inquire at the office?"

"No, no, there's no occasion for that," protested Haddon agitatedly. "Room 110 has been occupied for some months by—Mr. Philip Farley."

"What!"

"The candidate opposed to McShane for district attorney," added Haddon with a half-smothered groan.

Had a clap of thunder shook the walls of the room, the momentary silence that followed could not have been more vivid. Hargrave appeared dumfounded. Coleman caught his breath with surprise, and his brother detective glanced with a look approaching that of awe at the stern, white face of Felix Boyd.

"Why have you not mentioned this before?" the latter slowly demanded.

"Because," Haddon forcibly declared, "I know Philip Farley as well as I know you, Felix Boyd, and I know he could not be guilty of any crime."

"Who implied that he was guilty?" snapped Boyd. "Stop a moment, Joe."

"For what?"

"Don't leave this room—not yet!"

"What do you mean? Do you dare imply that I would warn——"

"Stop right there," Boyd sternly interrupted. "I dare anything, Joe, when I see occasion. You wired me to this house to clear up this affair, and I am going to do it—and do it in my own way! Akerman, let no man leave this room without my consent. Place any man who attempts to do so under instant arrest. This way, Jimmie, and I'll give you the key to this mystery."

There was no opposing Felix Boyd at such a time. He overawed men less with arguments and violence than with a subtle magnetic force and influence that none could successfully resist. Haddon recoiled as if tongue-tied, while Akerman strode to the closed door and placed his brawny shoulders full against it.

Felix Boyd no longer observed either. Seizing Coleman by the arm, he drew him to the open window, crying rapidly, in tones that reached the ears of all:

"Room 110, Jimmie, is the third beyond the portico roof. Note the projecting cornice and the narrow spaces between the several windows; also the indications of dirt on the cornice, as if left by soiled shoes. It would be child's play for a man to work his way along the cornice from one window to another, unobserved in the darkness of the court, and thus pass from Room 110 to the windows of this one. Jimmie, I found this window unlocked!"

"By thunder!" muttered Coleman amazedly. "This may be right!"

"It is right," Boyd emphatically declared, leaping back into the room and darting to McShane's body. "Now, follow me, Jimmie. This man was clubbed to death; most likely with the butt of a revolver. Observe his damaged watch. It was broken by a blow, obviously in a brief struggle, so brief that it was not overheard in the adjoining rooms."

"Surely not," cried Coleman excitedly.

"Note the hour: half-past eleven," continued Boyd, speaking with intense rapidity. "The watch evidently stopped when the crime was committed. The card-players had been gone from the room fully three hours. Yet some intruder, presumably one familiar with the use of the room and the habits of the players, afterward entered."

"Who so likely, then, as the occupant of a room near by?"

"Right!" cried Boyd, springing to his feet and hastening to the door. "Follow me, all of you. The catch-lock on this door is easily operated from

within. Step into the corridor. Now note these metal figures on the door. Observe that the varnish near the number 9 is somewhat marred, and the number itself is not firmly driven down to the wood. It is obviously attached by two small spindles on the back of the metal."

"But to what in thunder does this lead?" demanded Coleman, who, despite his habitual grim composure, now was shaken with excitement.

"To this," cried Boyd, in vehement whispers. "The 9 has been temporarily removed and another figure substituted, thus briefly changing the number of the room. The varnish was marred when a knife blade was forced under the figure to remove it. The——"

"But with what object?"

"Faugh!" cried Boyd, with scornful asperity. "Follow me and see. Note the number on this door, Room 110. Here, too, we find the varnish marred, the figure 0 imperfectly replaced. It has been briefly removed, and this 0 was the figure that replaced the 9 on the other door, changing the number of that room to 110. Do you not see the point, Jimmie? Man alive! what could have been more simple?"

"You think——"

"I think that the occupant of this room invited McShane to visit him and to come to Room 110; that he directed him to enter by way of the side entrance yonder; that he then reversed the room numbers and reached the card-room by the way of the cornice and window; that he there received McShane, explaining the appearance of the room in some plausible fashion, and that he there killed him in cold blood, Jimmie, and thus removed a political opponent who threatened to defeat——"

"I beg pardon! Is it of me, sir, that you are speaking thus?"

The door of the room at which the several men were standing had been quickly opened, along with the startling interruption, and upon the threshold appeared the tall, slender figure of the man, long since familiar enough in New York politics, then running against McShane for district attorney.

Felix Boyd had hoped for no less than this, providing that the man then was in the room. He recoiled slightly, then quickly strode nearer and cried sternly:

"If you are Philip Farley—yes, it is of you I am speaking!"

"I am he, sir!"

"You are under arrest, then, for the murder of Harvey McShane."

As Akerman afterward said, it was the speediest investigation of obscure bits of evidence, and the most quietly sensational arrest, that he ever had witnessed.

Even the Wall Street stock-broker, Rodney Hargrave, as he and Boyd left the hall together after Farley's removal, remarked to his companion in accents of mingled admiration and approval:

"You're a wonder, Boyd; certainly a wonder. I could not have believed it in any man to have done such clever work. It's a hundred-to-one shot that you have hit the nail squarely on the head."

Without a glance at the speaker's heavy, sallow, and rather repulsive face, Mr. Felix Boyd shrugged his shoulders and smiled indifferently, remarking with dry terseness:

"I came here, Hargrave, to hit the nail on the head."

III.

Mr. Felix Boyd was busy, exceedingly busy, during the remainder of that eventful day.

Long before noon all New York was convulsed with the news spread broadcast through the columns of the daily press. That Harvey McShane had been deliberately and brutally murdered no sane man could reasonably doubt—and none did.

That his political opponent for district attorney was guilty of the crime, moreover, appeared almost equally certain. For against the damnable evidence accumulated against him, which was made all the more effective because of the intensely bitter personalities in

which the opposing candidates had indulged during the entire campaign, evincing an enmity that appeared without bounds—against all of this Philip Farley could offer little except an absolute denial of the crime and of any knowledge pertaining to it.

He admitted having been in his room from ten o'clock the previous evening until the hour of his arrest, but, being a bachelor and alone there he found the establishment of an alibi utterly impossible. He claimed to have retired before eleven—half an hour before the crime was said to have been committed—also that he knew absolutely nothing about any of the incriminating circumstances. Nevertheless, he was held pending further investigations, upon which about half of the Central Office were promptly detailed.

Concerning McShane's movements on the evening of the murder but little could be learned. He was known to have left Tammany Hall about eight o'clock, and was seen alone on Fifth Avenue half an hour later; after which all trace of him was lost until the finding of his corpse the following morning.

Naturally enough, political New York was in a furor—yet it proved to be of brief duration.

Soon after eight o'clock that evening, while Mr. Rodney Hargrave sat with his slippered feet upon the fender of the open grate in the library of his house in Fifty-ninth Street, his mind absorbed in a perusal of the latest newspaper reports of the tragic affair, his servant announced that a gentleman having important business, or so claiming, was at the street door and requested an interview.

Despite that no name or card had been sent in, Hargrave decided to grant the request, and the caller presently was ushered over the threshold.

A type of man less likely to have been expected scarce could be imagined. He was tall and slender, as lank as a rail, and wore a suit of rusty black, which so closely fitted his attenuated figure that it appeared as if he certainly must have gotten into it with the

help of a shoe-horn, or some such appliance.

His sleeves and trousers were scant, and from them protruded an ungainly display of long hands and feet; while his cadaverous countenance, the hatchet-like thinness of which was but little relieved by a scraggly brown beard, was lighted by a pair of sunken, shifty, gray eyes, as narrow and crafty as one could well imagine.

His every movement, too, was in keeping with his appearance. He came with a servile bow over the threshold, wringing his gaunt hands with almost piteous nervousness, while his restless eyes evaded the inquiring stare and frown with which Rodney Hargrave received him.

"Well, well, my man; who are you?" the broker bluntly demanded. "And what brings you to my house?"

The sketch and outline of a man bowed and scraped, still wringing his thin hands, while his attenuated legs bore him toward a chair at one side of the library table. Yet he did not sit, but stood bowing gauntly, with his sunken eyes glowing like sullen coals in the tiny twin caverns in his wagging skull.

"I am only Crosby—ahem! Mr. Hargrave, sir," he huskily rejoined, clearing his throat with a hollow cough, and speaking with an air of such abject servility that the frown on Hargrave's heavy face became an ugly scowl.

"Crosby, eh?"

"I—ahem, sir! I am one of the hall servants at the—ahem! the hotel in which—er, Mr. Harvey McShane was murdered."

Was it this faltered introduction, the mere words of the speaker, or the air and aspect of the cringing wretch, that brought such a change to Hargrave's sallow face? It suddenly was left without a vestige of color, with his lips viciously twitching, and he arose abruptly and closed the library door.

"The room is chilly," he growled, as he resumed his chair.

"Yes, it is chilly, Mr. Hargrave, sir."

"A servant at that hotel, did you say? Suppose you are, my man; what

is that to—you may sit, if you like. What brings you here?"

The lank figure of the visitor sank with angular awkwardness upon the edge of the chair near the table, on which he now laid the cap he had held under his arm.

"I—ahem! I have called on business, Mr. Hargrave, sir," he replied, with his shifty eyes now meeting those of his hearer. "I have called to say, Mr. Hargrave, sir, what much better may be said only to you, perhaps, than to another."

"Well, what do you mean by that?" demanded Hargrave, with frown deepening.

"I—ahem! I was about the side entrance and corridor on the second floor, Mr. Hargrave, sir, most of last evening, on which the murder was committed."

"Well, well, suppose you were," snapped Hargrave. "What's that to me, you rascal?"

The epithet appeared to fall on deaf ears.

"Ahem! Nothing at all to you, Mr. Hargrave, sir; certainly nothing at all to you," Crosby humbly asserted, with a nervous smirk. "Only I—ahem!—I thought you might like to know, before I tell others, what I—er—happened to see last evening."

Hargrave's heavy brows drew down until they fairly hid the gleaming black eyes below them.

"And do you think that I have any special interest in anything you may have seen?" he harshly demanded.

Crosby shook his head in dismal dissent.

"No, it's not that, Mr. Hargrave, sir," he replied, with abject humility. "I only ventured here to inform you because—ahem!—because I feel that you would prefer to know what I know before I—er—tell it to others."

Hargrave shrugged his heavy shoulders and indulged in a low laugh of contempt.

"I fail to see at what you are driving, my friend," he now said with less austerity. "Come to the point and tell me. You were, you say, about the side

entrance and corridor during last evening?"

Mr. Crosby appeared a little more at ease, now that the business was fairly broached. He drew nearer the edge of his chair and nodded several times in quick succession.

"Yes, I was, Mr. Hargrave, sir. I was about there all the evening."

"And what did you see, pray, that you deem of such importance?"

The restless, shifty eyes sought the closed door for a moment, and the hollow voice took on the husky whisper of voluntary caution.

"I'll tell you, Mr. Hargrave, sir. I saw the card-players, you and your friends, Mr. Hargrave, sir, when you left the house by the side door. It was barely eight, sir, and——"

"Well, well, I know all that."

"So you do, Mr. Hargrave, sir," assented Crosby, with a series of jerky nods. "But what you don't know—ahem!—what you don't know, Mr. Hargrave, sir, is about the stranger who entered only a little later, stealing in by the side door and up the deserted stairs——"

"Stranger!" interrupted Hargrave with a growl. "What stranger?"

"I wouldn't say, sir," gasped Crosby with an abject cringe. "Indeed, I wouldn't say, Mr. Hargrave, sir. Yet from the room out of which I was peering, first having observed him only by chance, I saw that the man was in disguise—a bearded man with a wig on, Mr. Hargrave, sir, of that I am sure——"

"Well, well; continue!"

"I—ahem!—I suspected he might be up to some evil, sir, and I—well, Mr. Hargrave, sir, I'm a poor man, and I thought I might possibly get something, sir, for—for——"

"For keeping your mouth shut," interrupted Hargrave, with renewed asperity. "Is that what you would say?"

"Well, Mr. Hargrave, sir, I'm a poor man, and——"

"Cut that out and continue, you rascal! What more did you see?"

Crosby bowed a little nearer, with the glow in his cavernous eyes perceptibly

brighter; while he huskily continued, with the air and eagerness of a voluntary confidant:

"I saw the bearded man, Mr. Hargrave, sir, when he reversed the metal numbers on two of the doors. One was that of the card-room, Mr. Hargrave, sir; the other that of Mr. Philip Farley."

"You saw him do it, eh?"

Not for an instant, now, was Hargrave's intense gaze leaving the haggard, abject face of his visitor.

"Yes, Mr. Hargrave, sir, I saw him," continued Crosby. "I also saw him, sir, when he entered the card-room; and I saw McShane when he arrived a little later. Don't blame me, Mr. Hargrave, sir. I'm a poor man, and——"

"Cut that out, and tell your story."

"Don't blame me, Mr. Hargrave, sir, because I was curious. Don't blame me, sir, because I clambered to the top of the portico roof to peer beneath the curtain of the card-room window. Don't blame me because——"

"You miscreant! You prying devil!" hissed Hargrave between his teeth. "What do you mean to tell me?"

"Mr. Hargrave, sir, I'm not the man you think me," pleaded Crosby with an affrighted cringe. "I wouldn't say what I saw—ahem!—save only to you, sir! If I saw the—er—the man with a beard, Mr. Hargrave, sir, conferring with McShane and figuring with his pencil on a paper laid over one of the cards, I could easily forget it forever, Mr. Hargrave, sir, if——"

"If you saw him at that time you must have seen him without the disguise, which——"

"Stop a bit, Mr. Hargrave, sir!" interrupted Crosby, too eager to make his own statement to seriously notice his hearer's remark or the ghastly changes that were coming over him. "I have brought the card here with me, Mr. Hargrave, sir, lest—ahem!—lest others should detect the lines upon it left by the writer's pencil, and begin to suspect what I already know. Here is the card, and if you say the word, Mr. Hargrave, sir, I will cast it into the open grate."

Instead, however, Crosby cast it upon the table only—the ace of diamonds—the card observed and studied by Mr. Felix Boyd that very morning.

Hargrave barely glanced at it. He alone knew what memories it aroused, and what hideous, threatening possibilities this bearer of it had suggested. The face of the stock-broker was as white as the collar around his flabby, hot throat; yet there appeared to have settled upon him a calm utterly at variance with his dreadful aspect—a calm born of the one and only hope his visitor voluntarily had tendered him.

"If you saw all this, Crosby, you must have kept it to yourself with some object in view," he slowly rejoined, with a voice utterly beyond verbal description.

The man opposite smirked and bowed and wrung his hands.

"I am a poor man, Mr. Hargrave, sir, and I——"

"Stop there! You have said you could forget all that you saw last night, Crosby, if—am I right?"

"Yes, Mr. Hargrave, sir."

"You have told no man?"

"One man only—yourself, Mr. Hargrave, sir."

"And if a price is paid for your silence?"

"From the moment I accept a part payment, Mr. Hargrave, sir, my lips shall be as securely sealed as those of—Harvey McShane."

"Stop a—a bit! You're not half a bad—bad fellow, Crosby! I think—yes, I will make you a—a part payment this very moment!"

"As you please, Mr. Hargrave, sir!" humbly murmured the other.

Hargrave did not appear to hear him. His last faltered phrases had been uttered with a hollow, gasping gurgle deep down in his huge throat. With his perspiring palms on the arms of his chair, he was striving to rise. Presently he gained his feet, then tottered to a safe in one corner of the room, and, with some difficulty, succeeded in opening the heavy door, to take from an inner drawer a roll of bank-notes.

When he turned to approach Crosby, the latter arose from his chair. Hargrave's ponderous figure was swaying slightly as he walked, with knees knocking together as if his limbs were growing too weak for his heavy body. He came nearer, muttering brokenly and counting the bank-notes in his damp, tremulous hands.

"If you accept, you'll be—you said you'd be—silent! Not a word of it—never! This is only in—in part payment! Not a bad fellow, Crosby—no! Part payment only, eh? But you—you said it, Crosby! It seals your lips—forever!"

Crosby had bowed so low that his face was briefly hidden from the haggard stare of the ghastly, swaying speaker. When it was raised again—the scraggly beard had vanished and the sunken eyes had dropped their servile humility for the stern fire of vindicated justice.

From the gray, twitching lips of Rodney Hargrave, as he recoiled, with knees yielding under him, there issued only one wild, inarticulate cry, with a name that rang through every nook and corner of the quiet house:

"Felix Boyd!"

Boyd leaped forward to catch him as he fell, but he could not sustain him. With a crash that shook the building, Hargrave dropped like a dead weight to the library floor, the victim of an apoplectic stroke.

"Not yet dead, Jimmie, but next door to it. He may stave it off for a day or two, not longer."

"A bit surprised at his collapse, Felix, wasn't you?"

"Rather. I expected to remove him in irons, Jimmie, not leave him at home on his death-bed. No doubt it's quite as well, however. It saves the prison warden a painful job."

"But how the dickens did you sift it to the bottom so quickly, Felix? I'm blessed if I'm not still in the dark."

"I can enlighten you in a jiffy, Jimmie," smiled Felix Boyd, reaching for his pipe on the sill of his office window in Union Square.

It was the day following the collapse of Rodney Hargrave, and the truth was out, as well as Philip Farley; and a party politic was breathing sighs of relief.

Boyd gazed through a wreath of smoke at the Central Office man, who had dropped in to learn the particulars, and the former presently disclosed the series of deductions which had led to his remarkable exploit.

"It was simple, Jimmie; exceedingly so," Boyd began. "My first discovery was entirely accidental, that one of the metal figures appeared to have been recently removed from the door of the card-room, a fact which I casually observed while waiting at the door. Had there been no crime committed in the room the previous night, I should have thought no more of the matter. Under the circumstances, however, I kept the possibility in mind."

"Quite naturally, Felix."

"Upon learning from Haddon the names of the six players usually in the card game," continued Boyd, "I at once decided that the murder was not committed while the game was in progress, nor in the presence of the several players. They are not men who would suppress the truth about such a crime, even to have shielded one of their number."

"By no means."

"I therefore reasoned that the crime must have been committed after the game ended, which further led me to think that the criminal might possibly have been one of the players, having some ulterior motive, and whom we knew to have easy access to the room."

"Certainly."

"Ordinarily the game ended early in the evening, and Hargrave informed us that it had ended before eight o'clock. McShane's broken watch, however, indicated that the crime was committed at half-past eleven. I at once mistrusted that the watch might have been damaged after the deed was done, and the hands set to mislead us, and an examination with my lens confirmed that suspicion."

"How so?"

"I discovered that the hands no

longer could be moved with the stem-winder, owing to the broken works; yet one of them, I saw, was slightly bent in a way that plainly indicated that it had been forced around the face so as to denote the time recorded."

"Ah! I see," nodded Coleman.

"I then decided that the crime had been committed by one of the players, probably very soon after the game ended, his plans having been previously laid."

"Being perfectly familiar with the room and the habits of the players, that might have been fairly easy," admitted Coleman.

"That was my reasoning, Jimmie," nodded Boyd. "I next discovered on the table a card on which a slip or sheet of paper evidently had been laid, in order to write on the paper, the surface of the cloth-covered table being too soft. The lines left by the writer's pencil, Jimmie, showed quite plainly on the glazed surface of the card, and with my lens I could detect numerous small numbers. Plainly enough, then, McShane and his assassin had been computing some arithmetical problem, possibly involving a matter of money."

"By Jove! that suggested the motive for the crime," exclaimed Coleman.

"Exactly," bowed Boyd. "Next I discovered the several hairs on the side-board. My first thought was that a woman had been there, the hairs being too long to have come from the head of a man. I dropped that idea, however, when it occurred to me that one of the card-players might have returned to the room in disguise, removing the same and hiding it back of the cracker-jar before receiving McShane. This suspicion was confirmed when, upon examining the hairs under a microscope, I discovered on them the particles of glue which had attached them, obviously enough, to the basis of a false beard."

"Clever, Felix! On my word, it was clever!"

"Having arrived at that point, Jimmie, the number on the door again recurred to me. It at once suggested that the criminal, assuming that he had removed the metal figure, had done so

with a design to fix his crime upon another."

"Sure thing! I see the point, Felix."

"I then opened the window, Jimmie, to see by what way a stranger might have got into the card-room. You already know what I found."

"Certainly."

"I next went into the corridor to find another door from which a metal figure had been removed, knowing that, if the crime was to be put upon another, he probably was the occupant of a room near by. I readily located it, and upon learning that Farley was the tenant, the entire scheme at once became plain to me."

"That of throwing the guilt upon McShane's political opponent—surely that was the scheme, dead open and shut!"

"Precisely," nodded Boyd. "Then, satisfied that one of the card-players was the guilty man, I resolved to arrest Farley in order to blind the criminal, giving him to believe that his design had been successful, and to get time for further investigations."

"A capital move."

"It served me admirably, Jimmie," continued Boyd. "I learned during the day that all six of the players could establish an alibi after nine o'clock, and I also learned that Hargrave alone was acquainted with Farley, and informed of the fact that the latter knew about the poker game and occupied Room 110."

"Humph!" grunted Coleman. "That last at once pointed to Hargrave as the criminal."

"Exactly, Jimmie," smiled Boyd. "I then decided that, in case I could make Hargrave believe that I knew him to be guilty, and that I saw him in the card-room with McShane, I could evoke from him a self-betrayal that would serve to convict him. You already know how I went at it, Jimmie, and with what result."

"I should say so," laughed Coleman grimly. "You turned the criminal down, all right, Felix. Yet there still is one point about which I am at sea."

"What is that, Jimmie?"

* "Why did Hargrave commit the crime?"

"I learned why, Jimmie, from certain papers in his safe, which I took the liberty to examine. It appears that McShane, who was trustee of several small estates, had been speculating in the stock market. In order to conceal the fact, lest it should reflect upon his discretion, if not his honesty, he had Hargrave secretly do the business in his name."

"I follow you."

"It further appears that Hargrave has gone to the wall financially in the recent bear market, and that McShane, in need of campaign funds, was pressing him hard for the money which he, on the contrary, had won by his secret speculations."

"And, being unable to pay him, Hargrave determined to balance their secret account by killing McShane, eh?"

"That was just the size of it, Jimmie."

"The rascally dog!"

"He promised to pay McShane if the latter would call on him that evening. Pretending that their meeting should be kept quiet, Hargrave instructed him to enter the hotel by the side door and come to Room 110, near the head of the stairs, and to bring with him the memoranda slips which Hargrave had

given him showing his financial obligations."

"And McShane did so, eh?"

"Nothing less, Jimmie," smiled Boyd. "It was while figuring up these slips, which he afterward made away with, that Hargrave left the telltale evidence on the ace of diamonds. While so engaged, moreover, he probably arose and poured a drink, since we found one untasted on the table. Instead of drinking it, Jimmie, he returned back of McShane's chair and killed him with a single blow with the butt of his revolver."

"Dastardly!"

"Next he opened one of the windows and left a little dirt on the cornice, to point to the theory I suggested. Then he secured the evidence of his obligations to McShane, resumed his disguise, and departed as he had come. That's all, Jimmie, quite all—barring two rather obvious facts," added Boyd, laying aside his pipe.

"What are they, Felix?"

Mr. Felix Boyd smiled and yawned, elevating his heels to his office desk.

"There now are two less evils in the world, Jimmie," said he dryly. "A bad politician and a crooked stock-broker."

"Humph!" grunted the Central Office man grimly. "That's right, Felix, yet it seems too good to be true!"



A BLOODLESS TRAGEDY

THE practise of dueling is on the decline in France, the country which has been peculiarly its home. It grows more ridiculous year by year, and those who engage in it become more and more a laughing-stock. Not long ago a Paris journalist, who had by some criticism offended a politician, received from him the following letter:


"SIR: One does not send a challenge to a bandit of your species; one simply administers a cuff on the ears. Therefore I hereby cuff both your ears. Be grateful to me for not having recourse to weapons.

The journalist answered:

"MY DEAR SIR AND ADVERSARY: I thank you, according to your wish, for having sent me cuffs by post, instead of slaughtering me with weapons. Cuffed by post, I respond by despatching you by post six bullets in the head. I kill you by letter. Please consider yourself dead from the first line of this epistle.

"With a respectful salutation to your corpse, I am,

"Very truly yours, _____"



Just think of a rice cereal as dainty and light as a snowflake, as wholesome and satisfying as meat, and yet so tempting that every child and every grown-up wants *more* when once they have tasted it.

Quaker Rice

(Puffed)

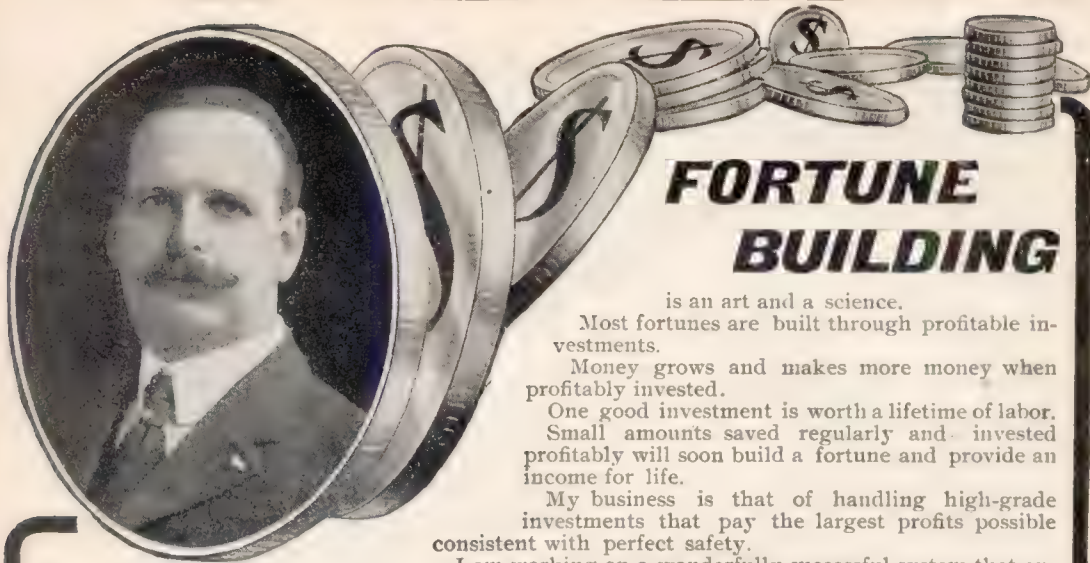
is that cereal. Made from the choicest white rice, by a patented "puffing" process that expands each grain or kernel many times in size, it has a dainty flavor, distinctively its own.

The same process that puffs the rice, also cooks it thoroughly. Quaker Rice is instantly ready to serve, with milk or cream and a dash of sugar, *after warming for a minute in a hot oven.*

While rice has a world-wide fame as a healthful and wholesome food, Quaker Rice is a revelation of its dainty deliciousness. Order a package of your grocer today, and learn how truly delightful it is.

Quaker Rice can be made into the most delicious and wholesome candies, such as Quaker Rice Balls, Quaker Rice Brittle, etc., recipes for which will be found on each package. Children can eat all they want without the slightest fear of consequences.

Quaker Rice is sold by grocers everywhere at 10c the package.
Made by the Manufacturers of Quaker Oats. Address, Chicago, U. S. A.



FORTUNE BUILDING

is an art and a science.

Most fortunes are built through profitable investments.

Money grows and makes more money when profitably invested.

One good investment is worth a lifetime of labor. Small amounts saved regularly and invested profitably will soon build a fortune and provide an income for life.

My business is that of handling high-grade investments that pay the largest profits possible consistent with perfect safety.

I am working on a wonderfully successful system that enables me to do this.

I have made millions of dollars for my 10,000 satisfied clients. Many of them are receiving 10 per cent., 20 per cent., 30 per cent., and even a higher rate of dividends per annum, while their original investments show a remarkable increase in value. I can do the same for you. If you desire to build a fortune, send me your name and I will mail you

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my illustrated investment paper, giving full information and explaining my successful system. It tells what I have done, how I do it, and gives advice that may be worth thousands of dollars to you. Write for it to-day.

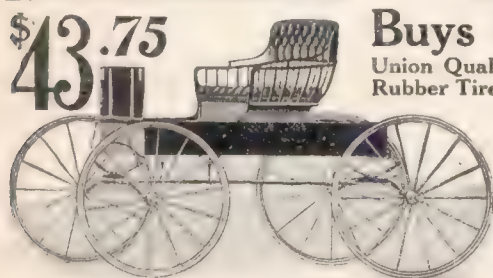
A. L. WISNER & CO., BANKERS
Hudson Bldg., Suite 75, New York

Have You "SHE?" By H. Rider Read Haggard

POSSIBLY you have and it is so long ago that you would like to read it again. The many inquiries we have received from persons who have read "AYESHA; OR, THE RETURN OF 'SHE,'"—the companion story to this masterpiece recently published in *The Popular Magazine*—led us to make arrangements with a leading publisher to supply us with a special limited De Luxe edition of "She," handsomely bound and profusely illustrated with twenty-one full page half-tones. It is manifestly the edition that every reader wants.

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\$43.75 Buys This Rubber Tire Wagon
Union Quality. Fully Guaranteed. Best hickory wheels, $\frac{3}{4}$ in. Rubber Tire, long distance, dust proof, high arched axles; oil tempered springs. First quality material and finish. Worth nearly double our **Factory Price**. We ship for your examination, without a cent in advance, if desired, and allow

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No Security, No Endorsements, No Interest

We open hundreds of confidential charge accounts every business day for **Diamond Rings, Pins, Brooches, Lockets, etc., and High Grade Ladies' and Gents' Watches,** and the larger percentage of these accounts are with persons who had always considered **Genuine Diamonds** a luxury until they read our little booklet: "HOW EASILY YOU CAN WEAR AND OWN A DIAMOND." It answers every question, and tells how every honest person, no matter where they live, can select any article they desire from our **Million Dollar Stock.** Have it sent to them on approval subject to examination, paying only one-fifth the cost on delivery and the balance in eight equal monthly payments. **Write for a copy today. Mailed Free.**

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It is a wise investment in the most valuable, stable and quickest cash producing gem in the world. Diamonds have increased in value more than twenty per cent in the past twelve months, and the best of European authorities predict an even greater increase during the coming year.

Our Prices Are From 10 to 15 Per Cent Lower than the ordinary spot cash retail jeweler. This

is made possible by the fact that we are direct importers and sell a thousand Diamonds where the retail jeweler sells but one.

Our Handsome New Catalog a copy of which will be mailed to you with booklet mentioned above, contains 66 pages and 1,000 illustrations of all that is new and up-to-date in artistic jewelry. It affords you the pleasure of selecting in the privacy of your own home such articles of Jewelry as you may desire for yourself or your loved ones. **Write for a copy today.**

Our Guarantee, aside from the fact that we are one of the oldest (est. 1858) and the **Largest Jewelry House** in the U.S., we give a signed guarantee as to quality and value with every Diamond sold. You can exchange any Diamond bought of us at any time for other jewelry or a larger stone.

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**DIAMOND CUTTERS
WATCHMAKERS - JEWELERS**
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Residence in New York City

One Block from Riverside Drive and close to the new residence of CHARLES M. SCHWAB, also one block from Subway Station

This house, which is one of the finest of its size in the city, is 20 feet wide and 105 feet deep. The front is of Indiana lime stone; the interior elaborately finished and decorated. There are 18 rooms, 3 bath rooms, electric light, gas and every modern convenience. Drawing-room, foyer-hall, library and dining-room on first floor; five master's bed-rooms, all large, and five servants' bed-rooms. The house faces the East, and has unusual sun and light. For sale, reasonable terms, as owner intends to reside out of New York. For further particulars, address Campbell, Station "O," P. O. Box 34, New York City.

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If you are honest and ambitious write me to-day. No matter where you live or what your occupation I will teach you the Real Estate business by mail; appoint you Special Representative of my Company in your town; start you in a profitable business of your own, and help you make big money at once.

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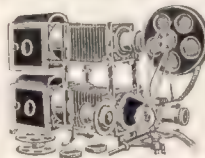
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NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY as our instruction Book and "Business Guide" tells all. We furnish Complete Outfits with Big Advertising Posters, etc. Humorous dramas brimful of fun, travel, history, religion, temperance work and songs illustrated. One man can do it. Astonishing Opportunity in any locality for a man with a little money to show in churches, school houses, lodge halls, theatres, etc. Profits \$10 to over \$100 per night. Others do it, why not you? It's easy; write to us and we'll tell you how. Catalogue free.

AMUSEMENT SUPPLY CO., 465 Chemical Bank Bldg., CHICAGO.

Aim for \$25 to \$100 a Week



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Special Advantages of this School:

Personal and prompt attention to every lesson of every student by the Secretary, the Treasurer and General Manager, or the President of the school. No work is handled by cheap assistants. This is a feature of vital importance.

The lowest tuition rates at which a thoroughly complete, practical, personal-attention course can be given. These are *special cut rates* which may be withdrawn without notice. Write us about them *at once*.

Instructors who have qualified themselves by years of active business experience in the great cities where business methods have reached their highest state of development.

A course which is calculated to show the student how to begin making money out of his knowledge of advertising in the shortest possible time.

Real, energetic assistance in securing good positions — *not* mere promises.

Instruction adapted to the individual requirements of the student — *not* the machine-made kind.

Unlimited time for personal interviews given to all students who are in a position to call at the offices of the school.

If you take up the study of advertising, and master it, you will be qualified to take a position paying a mighty good salary.

If you have a common school education and plenty of energy you are qualified to take up the study of advertising.

If you take up the study under our system of instruction by correspondence, you can learn this new, profitable profession at your own home, during spare evening hours, in a few months. Some of our students have completed our course of instruction and taken positions as advertisement writers and advertising managers in two to three months from the time of enrollment.

No special talent of any kind is necessary. An advertising man does not have to be an artist. He does not need any knowledge whatever of drawing. He does not have to be a verse writer. All that is essential is common sense, ambition to succeed, and the knowledge that nearly every one acquires in an ordinary city or country grammar school.

There is a practically unlimited demand for good advertising men. Many \$25 to \$50 a week positions are now held by incompetent men because trained advertising men are so scarce.

If you want to get into a better and more profitable kind of work write at once for a copy of our

Free Book About Advertising

This is a handsome, illustrated, 36-page, copyrighted book which tells all about our system of instruction by correspondence. It tells what a knowledge of advertising will do for you; how simple ideas are converted into cash; why the field for advertising men is so large and why the pay is so good, etc. This book also tells why we, after many years' experience, and after spending about a million dollars in successful advertising, and after teaching advertising for three years, are better qualified for this work than any other instructors.

Write at once (a postal card will do) for a free copy of this book. It may be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars to you. Write *now* — while you have the matter in mind.



C. TOWNSEND WELLS, Treasurer

Universal Endorsement.

Successful graduates, advertising experts, and substantial business houses throughout the United States endorse our course and our methods.

J. M. Lyon, Northville, N. Y., says: "Since commencing your course I have had an opportunity to do a little advertising for a manufacturing concern, and at an expense of \$15, I secured orders to the amount of \$2,000."

Carl W. Johnson, 30 Central Market, Minneapolis, says: "Since taking up the work with you—less than a year ago—I have been able to secure a much better paying position, where my advertising work has been exceptionally successful."

H. E. Pilgrim, Hamilton, O., says: "Your instruction opened my eyes. I had a good thing at my door but did not see it because it was so near."

D. Knight Finley became advertising manager of The Eagle Dental Manufacturing Co., Philadelphia, as a result of our instruction. He says: "I take pleasure in recommending your method of teaching."

Dr. J. Neuwirth, St. Charles, Mo., says: "I must say that your course was a material help to me in building up practice."

Our free book contains a dozen large pages filled with letters from people who tell what they think of our school and our methods of instruction.

**THE AMERICAN COMMERCIAL SCHOOL,
2216 Land Title Building, Philadelphia.**

We are convinced that **The Popular Magazine** is the best magazine devoted wholly to fiction published. Our business now is to convince you. A trial will do it.

The Popular Magazine

FOR MAY



When the American reading public sets the stamp of its approval on a periodical—as it has, most unquestionably, on **THE POPULAR MAGAZINE**—it means that that particular publication is in all respects a worthy one and well deserving of the honor; for the American reading public has a nice sense of discrimination and is not to be trifled with.

“Rowdy of the ‘Cross L.’”

the complete novel in this issue, is a story of ranch life by *B. M. Bower*, whose “Chip of the ‘Flying U.’” and “The Lure of the Dim Trails,” were two of the most popular stories of the past decade. You can’t afford to miss “Rowdy of the ‘Cross L.’” It is one of the best and most realistic tales of the West ever written, and after you have read it you will feel an instinctive longing to taste the tang of the prairie air, and, on the back of a sturdy bronco, do a few little deeds of heroism yourself.

THE SERIAL STORIES

“**The Malefactor**,” *E. Phillips Oppenheim*’s latest and greatest story; “**The Red Pope in the Yellow Palace**,” *George Bronson-Howard*’s weird tale of Tibet; “**At the Court of the Maharaja**,” by *Louis Tracy*, and “**A Plunge Into the Unknown**,” by *Richard Marsh*.

THE SHORT STORIES

“**The Law of the Desert**,” by *Bradley Gilman*; “**The Ringmaster’s Double Role**,” by *Philip C. Stanton*; “**Breaking Into Literature**,” by *Cheston Syer*; “**An Emperor Unawares**” (a “*Faraday Bobbs*” story), by *Louis Joseph Vance*; “**Mail Pouch No. 27**,” by *Reginald Wright Kauffman*; “**Manoa**,” by *Cutcliffe Hyne*; “**The Wheel Within**,” by *Scott Campbell*, and “**The Taming of a Philistine**,” by *Charles Carey*.

The May Popular Magazine will be on sale on all news-stands on the 10th of April, 1906

STREET & SMITH, 79-89 SEVENTH AVENUE, NEW YORK



THE EDISON PHONOGRAPH

THE above reproduction of an oil painting by Massani, now the property of Mr. Edison, depicts the delighted amazement of an old couple upon hearing a Phonograph for the first time. No less surprised and delighted are those who now hear the improved Edison Phonograph for the first time in a number of years. They are amazed to find it so different from what they thought, their previous opinions having been based on the old style machines or the imitations owned by their neighbors.

The Edison Phonograph is to-day the world's greatest and most versatile entertainer, and Mr. Edison is ever striving to make it better. It talks, laughs, sings—it makes home happy. It renders all varieties of vocal or instrumental music with marvelous fidelity. It offers something to suit every taste—every mood—every age—every day in the year.

No other good musical instrument can be so easily operated at so little expense. It will cost you nothing to hear it at the dealer's.

NOTE A splendid reproduction of the above painting by Massani, in fourteen colors, without advertising, 17 x 25 inches in size, mailed on receipt at Orange office of thirty cents in stamps or money order. Worth a place in any home.

Write for free booklet, "Home Entertainments with the Edison Phonograph," and name the nearest dealer.

National Phonograph Co., 39 Lakeside Ave., Orange, N. J.

31 Union Square, New York. 304 Wabash Ave., Chicago.



TRADE MARK
Thomas A. Edison

Vapo-Cresolene

(Established 1879.)

"Cures While You Sleep."

Whooping-Cough, Croup, Bronchitis, Coughs, Diphtheria, Catarrh.

Confidence can be placed in a remedy which for a quarter of a century has earned unqualified praise. Restful nights are assured at once.

Cresolene is a Boon to Asthmatics.

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Send Postal to Descriptive Booklet.

Cresolene Antiseptic Throat Tablets for the irritated throat, at your druggist or from us, 10c. in stamps.

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A True Hair Grower FREE

Are you bald?
Are you losing hair?
Does your scalp itch?
Does dandruff trouble you?

I CAN GIVE YOU RELIEF.

I am an Englishman. I was bald at an early age, and after using every liquid "tonic" on the market, in desperation tried the formula a noted Swiss savant gave me while travelling in his native land.

In Forty Days My Hair Grew Out Again

heavy and strong. Many of my friends obtained the same astonishing results. I then secured the savant's permission to sell the preparation, and have had less than one per cent of failures in nearly 700,000 cases treated in the past five years. It is equally successful for young and old of both sexes.

I AM A BUSINESS MAN, And frankly state that I am not conducting a charitable enterprise. I know what my preparation will do, and will give you a trial box free to let you prove it for yourself. When satisfied, I will send you more of it by mail at a moderate price.

FREE TO YOU. If unable to call at my office, I will send you a box by mail (in plain wrapper) absolutely free if you will send your name and address, plainly written in letter or postal, AT ONCE, as my supply of samples is limited. Address exactly as follows:

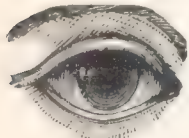
JOHN CRAVEN-BURLEIGH'S,
Sample Desk No. 40.
No. 150 Nassau st. (Am. Tract Soc. Bldg.),
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Restores Eyesight

SPECTACLES CAN BE ABANDONED

"Actina," a Wonderful Discovery That Cures Afflictions of the Eye Without Cutting or Drugging.

There is no need for cutting, drugging or probing the eye for the cure of most forms of disease, for a new system of treating afflictions of the eye has been discovered whereby all torturous methods are eliminated. There is no risk or experimenting, as hundreds of people have been cured of failing eyesight, cataracts, granulated lids and other afflictions of the eye through this grand discovery, when specialists, they state, termed the cases incurable.



General Alexander Hamilton, Tarrytown-on-the-Hudson, N. Y., highly recommends "Actina."

Louis Meyer, 93 Herman Street, Rochester, N. Y., writes: "Actina" has effected a wonderful cure in my wife's case, curing her of a severe eye trouble and I would not be without it.

Mr. A. L. Howe, Tully, N. Y., writes: "Actina" has removed cataracts from both my eyes. I can read well without my glasses; am sixty-five years old.

Robert Baker, Ocean Park, Cal., writes: I should have been blind had I not used "Actina."

Hundreds of other testimonials will be sent on application. "Actina" is purely a home treatment and self-administered by the patient, and is sent on trial, postpaid. If you will send your name and address to the New York and London Electric Association, Dept. 96B, 920 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo., you will receive absolutely free a valuable book—Prof. Wilson's Treatise on Disease.

A BEAUTIFUL FACE

All the ill methods of securing Beauty and a perfect complexion are replaced by **THE RUBBER COMPLEXION BULB**

It prevents and removes wrinkles; removes pimples, blackheads, freckles, and makes the skin soft, clear, smooth and white. A single soothing application produces remarkable results. Blackheads in many cases are banished in a few minutes. The speed with which it clears the complexion is almost beyond belief. No woman who owns one of these wonderful devices can be so far from free of wrinkles, blackheads. Always ready, nothing to get out of order. The regular price is 50 cents. In order to introduce our catalog of other specialties we will send the complexion bulb complete with full directions for only thirty-five cents, postage paid. You cannot afford to miss this bargain. Address, M. L. Krueger Mfg. Co., 157 Wash. St., Chicago, Ill.



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I was deaf myself for 25 years. I perfected and patented a small, invisible ear drum in order to help my own




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Won't you take the trouble to write and find out all about me and my invention? Tell me the cause of your deafness. Geo. P. Way, 1602 Majestic Bldg., Detroit, Mich.

When writing to advertisers, please mention The Popular Magazine.

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 Nothing Cures
 Rheumatism or
 Kills Pain like
Sloan's Liniment
Price, 25¢ 50¢ and \$1.00
Sold by all Druggists
DR. EARL S. SLOAN,
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We will send to any address our interesting and instructive book, telling all about correct care of the hair, proper styles for dressing, and how to become beautiful. This book also describes upwards of 500 complete line of switches and hair goods of every description and tells how we send

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 To prove to you that we can save you money and give you the best live French hair, we will send you on ten days consignment any design you may want for comparison. If satisfied, keep the goods, if not, return them at our expense. We guarantee to match any shade or quality. Send sample of your hair and describe what you want.

A FINE SWITCH FOR \$1.00
 Also complete line of hair goods at like prices.
 2 oz. 22 in. switch.....\$1.25.
 2 1/2 oz. 24 in. switch.....2.25.
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 1 lb. lightweight wavy switch.....2.50.
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 22 in. long, natural, wavy natural
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GLYCOZONE

cleanses the membrane of the stomach and subdues inflammation, thus removing the cause of your trouble.

It cannot fail to help you, and it is an absolutely harmless remedy.

Endorsed and successfully used by leading physicians for over 15 years.

Beware of concoctions of Oil of Vitriol, Sulphurous acid and water bearing similar names.

Sold by leading druggists. None genuine without my signature.

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 Valuable book-
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Send free trial bottle of **Glycozone**, for which I enclose 25c. to pay forwarding charges. Coupon good only until May 5, '06

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Address.....

Druggist.....

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Unbeatable Rat Exterminator Equally Effective against Mice, Roaches, Ants and Bed Bugs

RATS and MICE instinctively avoid the familiar forms of ready prepared for use doses; **Rough on Rats**, the original and old reliable, being unmixing and all poison, can be disguised in many ways, thus completely outwitting them. Though a poison and originally designed for Rats and Mice, experience has demonstrated it the most effective of all exterminators of Roaches, Ants and Bed Bugs. The only thing at all effective against the large Black Cockroach or Beetle. Fools the Rats, Mice and Bugs, but never disappoints or fools the buyer. Safely used 30 years. We also make **Rough on Fleas** (powder), for dogs, etc., 25c.

Rough on Roaches (non-poisonous), 15c., 25c. **Rough on Bed Bugs** (liquid), nozzle cans, 15c., 25c.

Rough on Corns (liquid) 25c.; (salve) 15c. **Rough on Corns** (plasters) 8 for 10c.

Rough on Bunions remedy 55c. **Rough on Bunions** plasters 5 for 10c.

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DEAFNESS

"The Morley Phone"



A miniature Telephone for the Ear—invisible, easily adjusted, and entirely comfortable. Makes low sounds and whispers plainly heard. Over fifty thousand sold, giving instant relief from deafness and head noises. There are but few cases of deafness that cannot be benefited.

Write for booklet and testimonials.

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REMOVES WRINKLES from the face and hands, no matter how deep the furrows. It is not a face powder, cream, cosmetic or bleach, contains no lead or other injurious ingredients; absolutely harmless, leaves the skin soft as velvet; will not grow hair; it is a natural beauty maker and will permanently remove all skin imperfections. Sample box for 2c postage. Prof. J. H. AUSTIN, 663 McVicker's Theatre Building, Chicago

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Endorsed by a Special Committee of the Legislature of New York, also by prominent men and women throughout the world.

**If you "Must Have a Drink"
TO DO BUSINESS
You Possess THE ALCOHOLIC CRAVING**

No man can longer take refuge in the hopeless statement, "I can't stop drinking." Any man can stop who will take the **OPPENHEIMER TREATMENT**.

The **OPPENHEIMER TREATMENT** gives a man back his interest in and enjoyment of work; it restores his energy and application, increases his value to his employer, and therefore increases his earning capacity. The tabulation of salaries of wage earners of all classes after taking the **OPPENHEIMER TREATMENT** shows

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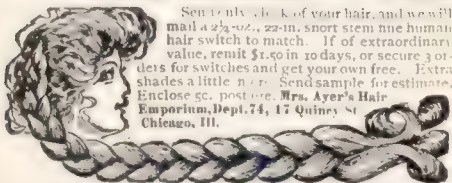
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Apply for a few minutes and the hair disappears as if by magic. **IT CANNOT FAIL. Modene supercedes electrolysis.** Used by people of refinement, and recommended by all who have tested its merits. Modene sent by mail in safety mailing cases on receipt of \$1.00 per bottle. Postage stamps taken. Address

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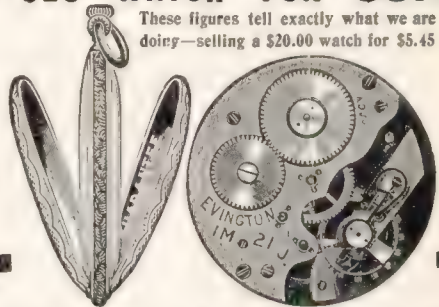
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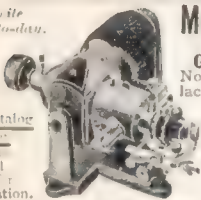
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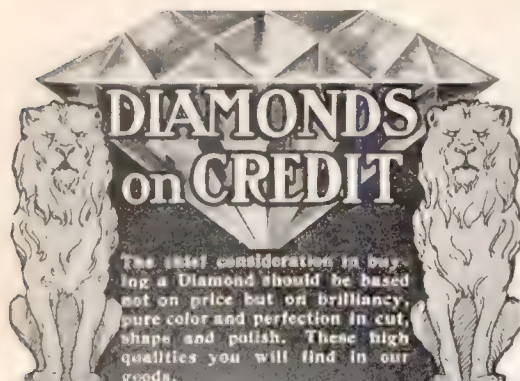
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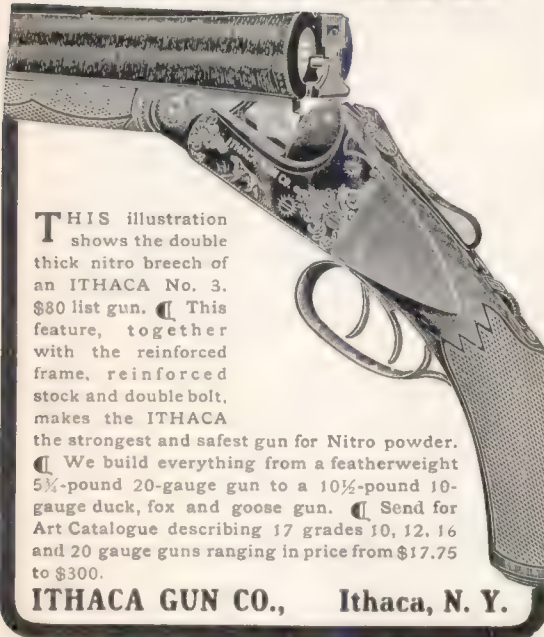
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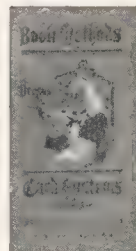
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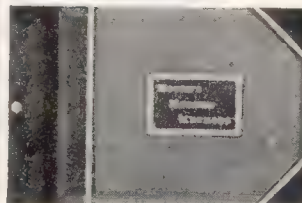
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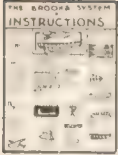
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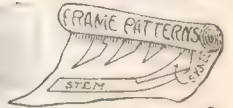
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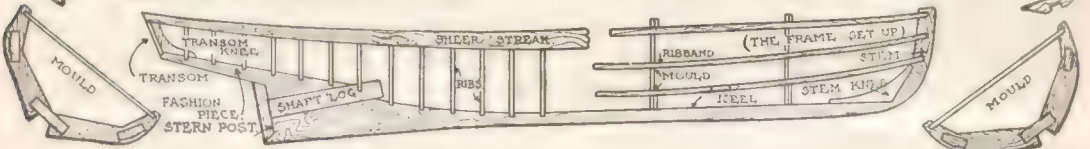
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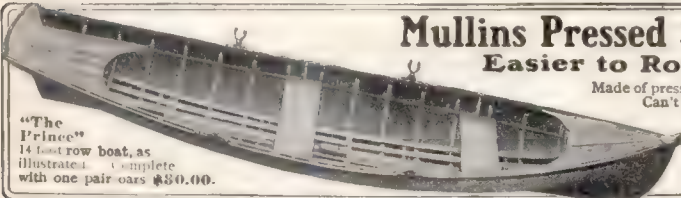
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